



# WE ARE GR

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## Citizen Committees Develop Organic Participatory Budgeting Process for ARPA Funds



Dear Resident,

I'm very pleased to update you on the public participatory budgeting process for the allocation of \$2 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. A group of fellow residents have volunteered and been appointed by the City Commission to follow a five-step template laid out by the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP), a nationwide leader in participatory budgeting. The process relies on these individuals to serve on the steering committee to create the process, engage the community, facilitate project idea brainstorming, develop ideas into workable proposals and ultimately manage the voting process on the proposals that best serve our residents.

The City's ARPA participatory budgeting process follows PBP best practice for municipal budgeting, which outlines \$1 million per 100,000 in population. The \$2 million that Grand Rapids has set aside for participatory budgeting exceeds similar sized cities such as Oakland, CA (\$185K per 100K), Durham, NC (\$889K per 100K) and Sacramento, CA (\$200K per 100K).

The City Commission has recommended dispersal of \$2 million in ARPA funds across the City's three wards. This allows for investment based in part on the distribution of demographic and economic factors in each Ward. The recommended ward distribution includes:

- \$1M in the Third Ward
- \$600K in the First Ward
- \$400K in the Second Ward

The first step in the process began in June with the City Commission forming a steering committee with equal representation from each ward. The ward committee consists of two residents per ward appointed by Commissioners with Mayor Rosalynn Bliss appointing the third representative for each ward.

### Goals

- Empower the people ("ownership" and "influence")
- Broaden and diversify engagement and participation
- Meaningful, visible, lasting improvement
- Sustainable public good
- Easy and seamless civic engagement
- Amplify marginalized voices
- Repeatable, scalable process
- Build resident leadership capacity
- Affordable housing and quality education

The steering committee is meeting weekly to further develop the decision-making process and adopt rules of engagement. They will also plan and execute outreach, education and plan a robust community engagement process that begins in October.

The committee is responsible for planning and guiding public engagement and generating ideas for ARPA projects based on specific priority areas for investment. Once they begin the initial engagement/ideation phase, they will look for project ideas that will be focused on one-time or time-constrained activities that address one of the five priorities outlined in ARPA and/or by the City Commission. Some of the qualifying project ideas could include:

- Infrastructure investments related to water, wastewater and broadband
- Evidence-based violence reduction strategies
- Remediation of lead paint or other lead hazards in homes
- Economic and health impacts of COVID-19 (includes assistance to households, small business and nonprofits)
- Incentive pay to front-line workers
- Investments in housing and re-housing
- Addressing educational disparities
- Investing in healthy childhood environments

Project ideas will be reviewed for eligibility under ARPA guidelines and feasibility of implementation. Eligible and feasible projects will be prioritized by a public vote and submitted to the City Commission for review and final approval before implementation may begin.

The steering committee is currently seeking additional volunteers that can assist with outreach, education, voting, and project scoping during the process. To get involved, and learn how and when to submit your project ideas, check [PBGR.org](http://PBGR.org), [facebook.com/PBGrandRapids](https://facebook.com/PBGrandRapids) and [twitter.com/PBGrandRapids](https://twitter.com/PBGrandRapids).

Mark Washington, City Manager



The steering committee members include:

- 1st Ward – Mallory Patterson, Michael Scholten (co-Chair), Adnoris (Bo) Torres
- 2nd Ward – Doug Booth, Cailin Kelly, Lisa Knight
- 3rd Ward – Kristian Grant, Kenneth Hoskins, LaKiya Thompson-Jenkins (co-Chair)

The steering committee adopted the following vision and participatory budgeting goals:

### Vision

"Through participatory budgeting, we will empower the people of Grand Rapids to make timely, informed decisions that lead to visible and lasting improvements within their neighborhoods. Our work will be guided by the value of equity, with an intentional and transparent process designed to include marginalized voices, people with lived experience, and diverse groups. This process will be structured to remove barriers and build community capacity."

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## City Details High Performance in Reaching Goals Outlined in Strategic Plan



In September's annual performance briefing to the City Commission, executive leaders provided an overview of work aligned to the City's four-year strategic plan that was accomplished throughout the City's fiscal year 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) and reiterated key strategies for fiscal year 2022 that were approved in the budget. City Manager Mark Washington and City staff reported that progress continues to be made on the City's strategic priorities despite the ongoing challenges posed by the evolving global pandemic, including a previously projected \$16 million income tax revenue loss.

The City's FY2021 Performance Management Report to the City Commission illustrates the progress made throughout the fiscal year and the key accomplishments achieved under the second year of the City's four-year strategic plan. One of the City's core values is accountability and measuring and transparently reporting our progress is one way we are working to be more accountable. City Manager Washington created the Office of Performance Management in the spring of 2019 and the City has worked to implement tools to better measure performance including Socrata, which is the software that drives our Key Metric Dashboard. The City has continued to lead with performance management for purposes of strategizing for the upcoming year, planning budgets and analyzing performance.

"This report is an accountability of the performance of our organization relative of the goals and objectives that were set in our strategic plan, City Manager Mark Washington said. "As we continue look through the lens of our organization's performance, we continue to lift our values which were reinforced through the City Commission's actions Tuesday on the values of sustainability, equity, accountability, collaboration, innovation and customer service. We will continue to make sure these are reflected along with our vision and mission in everything we do moving forward."

Washington told the commission that the report is representative of accomplishments completed in FY2021, but does not include all accomplishments and commitments detailed under the strategic plan. A more detailed report with additional information can be found here: <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Office-of-the-City-Manager/Strategic-Plan>. The report includes 2021 key accomplishments and 2022 project plans. The following are samples of items listed in the report which are organized around the themes of COVID 19 Response and Recovery and the City's six strategic priorities:

### COVID Response and Recovery FY2021 SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Helped secure \$38 million in CERA rent support for

Kent County

- Opened 24 social zone seating areas, 7 social district refreshment areas and 114 temporary use areas to support business
- Developed and executed next round of ERRIS investments, including economic recovery pivot that has put nearly \$5 million to work in the community
- Facilitated operation of temporary winter shelter with partners to serve persons experiencing homelessness

### COVID Response and Recovery FY2022 KEY STRATEGIES

- Continuing implementation of COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan
- Deploying \$46 million in ARPA investments as envisioned in the FY2022 Fiscal Plan
- Completing ERRIS investments in community
- Maintaining continuity of service to community
- Implementing temporary winter homelessness shelter

### Governmental Excellence FY2021 SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Piloted a Language Access Policy to assess financial impact from Feb – June and conducted ESL training for pilot departments.
- Worked closely with state and federal partners on COVID relief allocations and efforts, resulting in \$46 million in FY2021 ARPA funding and more than \$21 million in other relief.
- Maintained Stable Aa2 (Moody's) and AA (S&P) bond ratings in Series 2021 bond issuances.
- Launched Socrata Open Budget for increased fiscal transparency
- Employed 50+ GRow 1000 youth in City departments
- Implemented new building security measures and first phase of Visitor Management System
- No staff layoffs during the pandemic; only 8% employee turnover which exceeds our 10% target

### Governmental Excellence FY2022 KEY STRATEGIES

- Formalizing and launch innovation and Continuous Improvement program
- Embedding equity in Engineering and Purchasing contracts from request for proposal through contracting and reporting
- Expanding financial transparency through Socrata Open Expenditures and Capital Projects Explorer
- Negotiate and secure sustainable, equitable and mutually beneficial labor agreements
- Conducting an organization-wide facilities study and continuing progress on 201 Market / Kent County Road Commission sites
- Updating and refining Strategic Plan
- Organize and launch development process for updated Community Master Plan
- Leading legislative efforts as outlined in the City's adopted legislative agenda, including ongoing efforts to address COVID-related income tax losses

### Economic Prosperity and Affordability FY2021 SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Attracted Perrigo North American HQ to the Medical Mile in partnership with MSU, RPI and MEDC
- Paid \$525,000 in 105 small business grants and pivoted with balance of ERRIS economic recovery dollars
- Implemented Business Retention and Expansion

program; completed 52 BRE visits in partnership with The Right Place and MEDC

- Implemented Inclusion Plan for Economic Development projects – achieved over \$5 million of subcontractor commitments
- Continue to embed equity in all river-related work
- Operated GRow1000 2.0 that employed 286 youth
- Eight projects were awarded Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) adding 631 affordable housing units, 42 of which will be for Permanent Supportive Housing
- Eight (8) properties were brought into compliance with City codes through the Keeping People in Their Homes pilot
- During the pandemic fiscal year, managed to stage 202 events with 57 partners, including the Bridge event in partnership with DGRI and community partners – generating 46,000 in attendance; supported the return of ArtPrize, Festival of the Arts and the new Confluence event
- Due to the pandemic, the City experienced a 40% reduction in number of employees across the city (not just City staff) based on number of W-2s, however dollars of withholding have steadily increased since FY2018 and totaled \$84.8 million in FY2021
- Based on the United Way's recently published report evaluating 2019 data, on average, 51% of Kent County residents are earning above the ALICE threshold, however disparities persist in the Hispanic, 2 or more races and Black / African American populations
- The City's target for net new housing units for 2021 is 1,100 and we are on our way with 834 net new housing units with 225 of those being affordable housing units

### Economic Prosperity and Affordability FY2022 KEY STRATEGIES

- Implementing proposed Equitable Business Development priority project using \$750,000 of ARPA funds for small business grants and investment in Economic Service Organizations to assist businesses and increase capital access to Neighborhoods of Focus
- Continuing development of amphitheater on 201 Market redevelopment site
- Establishing Grand Rapids Housing Fund and Board
- Issuing RFP One for development of affordable housing through use of \$5 million in ARPA funds as envisioned by the FY2022 Fiscal Plan
- Recommending affordable housing zoning overlay to facilitate development of small lots – evaluate and update policy for reuse of land banked properties
- Completing first round of Special Event Sponsorship program supporting 14 events using ARPA funds and will complete a second round this fall.

### Engaged and Connected Community FY2021 SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Enhanced coverage and digital access for public meetings
- Transitioned to virtual engagement resulting in more than 13,000 participants and nearly 22,000 comments on various projects and initiatives
- Launched SMS/Text survey platform to gain immediate feedback on timely issues
- Finalized welcome plan with community partners to provide guidance and direction on welcoming refugees and immigrants to Grand Rapids

- Transitioned Neighborhood Summit to five outdoor events
- Reoriented Neighborhood Match Fund to focus on COVID-specific initiatives and outcomes
- Parks and Recreation engaged 670 people at engagement events led by Parks and Recreation in the second quarter of 2021 (April – June) and have engaged 1,000 people to date

#### **Engaged and Connected Community FY2022 KEY STRATEGIES**

- Conducting pilot project in Participatory Budgeting, allocating \$2 million across three wards for ARPA-related investments
- Launching communications/media training program for City staff to ensure consistent practices and messaging
- Beginning process for website redesign/refresh and update(s) to digital services
- Securing a contract for engagement strategy development and framework
- Conducting biannual community survey to update performance metrics and provide insights toward future strategies
- Developing and launching “Government 101” campaign to foster and development civic engagement, leadership and literacy
- Launching River for All engagement campaign

#### **Health and Environment FY2021 SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Continued to construct the biodigester and awarded a contract to install LED streetlights
- Received necessary approvals to install 1MW solar array at Lake Michigan Filtration Plant. Revisited strategies to install solar at Butterworth Landfill
- 443 full lead service lines replaced in 2020; \$5 million EPA grant received to accelerate work
- Opened new yard waste composting site – finished product available for residents
- 10 Park projects completed or being constructed. Advanced another 24 park redevelopment projects that are in design, including four river edge parks
- Planted 1,412 trees in 2020 bringing the total to 9,000 since 2001
- Secured \$1 million MDHHS Lead Hazard Control (CHIP) grant
- Doubled capacity of Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) - partnered with Network 180 on new co-response model
- The City’s 2020 carbon footprint was 52,400 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents; based on our recently announced municipal carbon emissions goal of 85% reduction by 2030 we have some work to do to decrease carbon emissions to 11,200 MTCO<sub>2e</sub> based on our 2008 baseline
- Waste diversion across our community has decreased steadily over the last four years; 16.5% was diverted in 2020 compared to a target of 40%
- The HOT team has had 61 referrals for mental health services and 22 for substance use disorder for January through June 2021

#### **Health and Environment FY2022 KEY STRATEGIES**

- Continue to explore the creation of a communitywide carbon emissions goal
- Complete LMFP solar installation and continue to

- pursue onsite solar deployment on Butterworth Landfill
- Formally launch C4 and E.H.Zero Buildings Initiative
- Leverage external funding for lead service line replacement - complete 1,600 replacements
- Acquire new park land in underserved areas of community, including the Drain Commission Site on Division Avenue
- Complete planning and begin redevelopment of Martin Luther King Park Lodge
- Collaborate with Kent County Department of Public Works to review how the proposed Sustainable Business Park could achieve the 40% diversion goal and evaluate alternative processing/disposal options for trash/recycling
- Recruit Lead Remediation Specialist and complete development of Residential Rental Certification Program to address lead in homes

#### **Mobility FY2021 SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Conducted Parking + Transportation Survey to inform future policy decision on parking, DASH operations, and curbside management
- Launched second shared micromobility vendor with addition of e-assist bicycles; pilot has accumulated 225,000 scooter and bike rides to date (not including ArtPrize)
- Constructed \$20.8M in Vital Streets projects, including \$3.1M in sidewalk projects.
- Continued extra cleanliness services at bus stops through Next Step. Deployed 31 new trash cans at transit stops.
- Inspected 44 miles of sidewalk YTD. During 2020 construction season, 1.6 miles of new sidewalk and 682 ADA ramps were installed
- South Division TOD (Division United) final project plan is expected from contractor in Fall. Will then integrate applicable results into department workplans and priorities
- Based on ACS data, which lags by 1-2 years, the percentage of annual trips to work via alternative transportation has doubled from 20% to 40% with ridesharing making up the largest type and walking and transit being second and third

#### **Mobility FY2022 KEY STRATEGIES**

- Analyze 9,000 responses to Parking + Transportation Survey and develop plan
- Invest \$17.3M in Vital Streets projects and \$2M in sidewalk inspection repair and connection projects
- Complete micromobility pilot and select long-term vendor
- Partner with The Rapid to install approximately 35 new bus shelters
- Initiate outreach for Neighborhoods of Focus based transportation solutions (potential ideas include car share and low-fare transit passes)
- Begin planning for development of mixed-use Library Parking Ramp with partners
- Continue to develop and implement flexible and responsive parking solution products to assist with return to work and employment growth
- Mobile GR began parking enforcement on July 1 and have taken responsibility for 462 complaints and 3,000 additional tickets in that time compared to 2019; will begin winter parking responsibilities as next step in

assuming parking enforcement duties from GRPD

#### **Safe Community FY2021 SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Finalized and began implementing Police and OPA Strategic Plans
- Implemented GRPD neighborhood policing model
- GRPD engaged in multiple deployments of Operation: Safe Neighborhoods, which started with community engagement and resulted in multiple arrests, 18 firearms seized
- 473 guns were taken off the street
- Transferred parking enforcement to Mobile GR to better utilize sworn personnel
- OPA facilitated RFP and recommended Cure Violence as an evidence-based crime reduction and violence intervention model and community partner
- Expanded personnel assigned to the Homeless Outreach Team to 1 Sergeant and 3 Officers from GRPD, 1 Captain and 2 Lieutenants for GRFD and a contract with Network 180 for 2 master’s level social workers and 2 recovery coaches
- GRFD started Self-Home Safety Assessment program; resumed GRFD Home Safety Assessments and smoke detector installs
- 88.6% of police beats are covered 24/7/365, which is short of the 100% target, but the last two measuring periods have shown increases that directly aligns when the Police Strategic Plan was passed
- The number of murders increased significantly from 2019 to 2020, 17 and 38 respectively, with 12 murders occurring in 2021 year to date
- Both gun crime and firearm discharges experienced significant increases from 2019 to 2020 (gun crime increased from 289 to 437 and firearm discharges from 853 to 2,053) and continue to see concerning numbers in 2021 (293 and 1,149 respectively through August)
- 581 persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homeless were stably housed through the City’s ESG programs in FY2021, which is a 55% increase from FY2020 (376 persons); 65% of persons at risk of homelessness stably housed were Black/African American and 11% were Hispanic/Latinx

#### **Safe Community FY2022 KEY STRATEGIES**

- City Manager to engage community and staff, and appoint a new Police Chief
  - Continuing implementation of the GRPD Strategic Plan, including neighborhood based policing model
  - Intensifying recruitment efforts to fill vacancies and proactively respond to anticipated retirements
  - Enhancing mental and behavioral health support by adding a mental health support specialist to the Homeless Outreach Team
  - Implementing Cure Violence
  - Improving OPA access to relevant GRPD records
  - Exploring options to improve GRFD response times in the Kalamazoo District of the Third Ward
  - Exploring options with partners for new regional training facility that could support GRFD and GRPD training
- The City Commission will convene on Wednesday, Nov. 10 to discuss priority strategies for FY2023. The workshop will feature a FY2021 financial review, and discussions on FY22 areas of focus priorities, American Rescue Plan Act fund usage and FY23 priorities.

## Having Trouble With Your...

### Rent?

If you are struggling to pay rent or have an eviction in process, apply for COVID Emergency Rental Assistance now. For the online application or in-person assistance, visit [endhomelessnesskent.org/cera](http://endhomelessnesskent.org/cera).

### Mortgage?

Are you or do you know anyone struggling to pay their FHA loan? If so, contact your/their mortgage servicer and request a forbearance to pause or reduce monthly payments.

All homeowners with FHA insured loans can ask for forbearance without any penalty. Find details at [hud.gov/coronavirus/homeowners](http://hud.gov/coronavirus/homeowners).

If you are behind on your property tax payments and are concerned about keeping your home, Michigan State University Extension is offering several one-hour virtual webinars about Property Tax Foreclosure Basics this fall. The presentation includes an overview of the three-year property tax timeline in Michigan, several options for possible assistance, and ways to plan paying back taxes to keep your

property.

Details about the Michigan Housing Assistance Fund (MIHAF) are going to be released soon and applications open this month. These funds will assist homeowners with eligible financial hardships due to COVID-19 with delinquent mortgage payments, property taxes, utilities, etc.

Learn more at [michigan.gov/mshda/0,4641,7-141-45866\\_107583-562746--,00.html](http://michigan.gov/mshda/0,4641,7-141-45866_107583-562746--,00.html)

## Odd/Even Parking Begins November 1st

A reminder that odd/even seasonal parking restrictions begin on Monday, November 1.

These restrictions play a crucial part in our efforts to clean and plow City streets.

Find out which streets have odd/even or one-side parking restrictions by visiting the link below: [grandrapidsmi.gov/oddeven](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/oddeven)

### Odd/Even and One-Side Parking Rules

Streets designated with seasonal parking signs will have the following restrictions in effect from 12:01 a.m. November 1 of each year to 11:59 p.m. April 1 of the following year:

- Odd/Even: On an odd date between 1 a.m. and 6 p.m., parking is prohibited on the even numbered side of the street. On an even date between 1 a.m. and 6 p.m., parking is prohibited on the odd numbered side of the street.
- One-Side: Parking is always prohibited on the posted side of the street.

If you are interested in reporting an odd/even parking complaint or issue you may:

- Use the “grcity 311” app on either IOS or Android app stores
- Use the “Report an Issue” webpage at [grandrapidsmi.gov/Report-an-Issue](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/Report-an-Issue)
- Call 311 or 616.456.3000 at any time



**Report a parking complaint**  
Use one of the options below to report a parking complaint

**Use the app**  
Use the “grcity 311” app found on either Apple or Google app store **01**

**Go on the web**  
Use the “Report an Issue” webpage at [grandrapidsmi.gov/report-an-issue](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/report-an-issue) **02**

**Call**  
You can call 311 to report an issue over the phone at anytime, even after hours! **03**

## No City Election in 2021 and Other Voting-Related News

The City of Grand Rapids will not hold a November election this year. Grand Rapids voters approved a charter amendment moving the election of City officials to the even year. City comptroller, three city commissioners and library board members will be on the ballot in 2022.

### Voting procedure changes

In the November 2018 election, Michigan voters approved Proposal 3, which changed a host of election laws. Here is how that law affects you and your fellow voters:

1. Absentee Voting (AV). If you are registered to vote, you are now eligible to receive an Absentee Ballot without a reason. In order to receive a ballot, you, as a voter, must fill out an application for a ballot before every election. If you want to be placed on a permanent AV list to receive an application prior to each election, please contact the Clerk's Office or sign up online at [grandrapidsmi.gov/avlist](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/avlist).

2. Straight Party Voting. The proposal reinstated the option to vote in the partisan section of the ballot by selecting the party only.
3. Voter Registration. If you're at least 18 years old and make any transaction with the Secretary of State, you will automatically be registered to vote. You may choose to cancel your registration. You may register by mail up to 15 days before an election and may register to vote in person at the Clerk's Office within 14 days of the election up to Election Day. You must prove residency in the city. If you prove residency and registers, you are eligible to vote.

### New precinct lines on the horizon

Another aspect of Proposal 3 was to create a Citizen's Redistricting Commission. The commission was formed to draw new lines for the U.S. House of Representatives, State House of Representatives and State Senate districts. Kent

County will also be drawing new county commission district lines. The district sizes will be based on the 2020 Census count. The City of Grand Rapids will review these new district lines to adjust precinct lines. Registered voters will get new voter registration cards in the mail next spring.

### Clerk's Office also offers passport and notary services

We also wanted to remind you that the Clerk's Office offers passport and notary services. The Clerk's Office serves as an agent of the United States Department of State for processing passport applications. If you or a family member would like to apply for a passport, you must make an appointment with our Clerk's Office. You can make an appointment by calling 616-456-3010. Also, if you need a document notarized, the Clerk's staff can assist you. The fee for notarization is \$5 per signature.

You can learn more about these services and all we have to offer on the City Clerk's website: [grandrapidsmi.gov/clerk](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/clerk).

## E.H.Zero to Equitably Focus on Affordability, Beneficial Health Outcomes; Reduce Energy Consumption and Carbon Emissions

Our Office of Sustainability and Performance Management, in partnership with U.S. Green Building Council of West Michigan and Urban Core Collective, is launching building policies and programs for Equitable, Healthy and Zero carbon buildings (E.H.Zero).

E.H.Zero is an evolution of our participation in the Zero Cities Project. In 2017, we were one of twelve cities selected to participate in the Zero Cities Project to develop an actionable and equitable roadmap to achieve a zero net carbon building sector by 2050. In partnership with Architecture 2030, we completed a baseline building assessment of the buildings in Grand Rapids that showed our main areas of focus were single family homes and commercial buildings over 10,000 sq. ft.

The Urban Core Collective agreed to serve as the City's equity partner to address residential homes. It created a Grand Rapids Equity Assessment Tool and conducted neighborhood surveys on energy efficiency program usage to our neighborhoods of focus. The U.S. Green Building Council of West Michigan served as our partner for commercial spaces,

engaging the commercial sector through the Grand Rapids 2030 District.

Through E.H.Zero, we intend to create a set of city-wide policy solutions that acknowledge and address the intersectionality between human health disparities, injustice and climate change. The desired outcome of E.H.Zero is residential and commercial building policies and programs co-created and supported by community (residents and commercial building stakeholders) focused on equitably achieving increased affordability, beneficial health outcomes, and resilience while reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions.

Transforming the way buildings and homes are designed, built and operated is one of the most important ways a city can support affordable housing, ensure clean healthy air in our communities and increase our resilience to the negative impacts of a changing climate. We will include local residents and organizations who have not historically had a seat at the table. We also will transform our built environment to create



long-term impacts for substantive change. Look for ways you can engage in the near future and for further information visit our E.H.Zero website at [grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Sustainability/Environmental-Sustainability/E.H.Zero](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Sustainability/Environmental-Sustainability/E.H.Zero).

## Protect Yourself From Cyber Bullies - National Cybersecurity Awareness Month



Cybersecurity is a topic that we need take seriously to protect ourselves and those around us from cyber criminals. October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month and the theme this year is "Do Your Part #BeCyberSmart." We are a Cybersecurity Awareness Month champion and want to share eight great tips from our partners at the National Cybersecurity Alliance, [staysafeonline.org](http://staysafeonline.org).

- 1. MAKE A LONG, UNIQUE PASSPHRASE** Length is more important than complexity. A strong passphrase is a sentence that is at least 12 characters long. Focus on positive sentences or phrases that you like to think about and are easy to remember.
- 2. PASSPHRASES AREN'T ENOUGH** Use 2-factor authentication or multi-factor authentication (like

- biometrics, security keys or a unique, one-time code through an app on your mobile device) whenever offered.
- 3. WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT** Links in email, tweets, texts, posts, social media messages and online advertising are the easiest way for cyber criminals to get your sensitive information. Be wary of clicking on links or downloading anything that comes from a stranger or that you were not expecting.
- 4. KEEP A CLEAN MACHINE** Keep all software on internet connected devices current to reduce risk of infection from ransomware and malware. Configure your devices to automatically update or to notify you when an update is available.
- 5. BACK IT UP** Protect your valuable work, music, photos

and other digital information by making an electronic copy and storing it safely. If you have a copy of your data and your device falls victim to ransomware or other cyber threats, you will be able to restore the data from a backup.

- 6. OWN YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE** Every time you sign up for a new account, download a new app, or get a new device, immediately configure the privacy and security settings to your comfort level for information sharing.
- 7. SHARE WITH CARE** Think before posting about yourself and others online. Consider what a post reveals, who might see it and how it might affect you or others.
- 8. GET SAVVY ABOUT WIFI HOTSPOTS** Public wireless networks and hotspots are not secure, which means that anyone could potentially see what you are doing on your laptop or smartphone while you are connected to them. Limit what you do on public WiFi and avoid logging in to key accounts like email and financial services.
- 9.

**Please visit the sites below for additional resources and tips.**

Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency:

Cybersecurity Tips  
[us-cert.gov/ncas/tips](http://us-cert.gov/ncas/tips)

Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency: Protecting Your Privacy  
[us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST04-013](http://us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST04-013)

Federal Trade Commission: Cybersecurity Basics  
[ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/small-businesses/cybersecurity/basics](http://ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/small-businesses/cybersecurity/basics)

Adobe & NCSA Security Awareness Video: Phishing and Ransomware  
[youtu.be/D\\_yAYhjNE-0](https://youtu.be/D_yAYhjNE-0)

## City Establishes Affordable Housing Fund

The City Commission has formalized part of its work to address racial and ethnic disparities in housing in Grand Rapids and preserve and increase affordable housing supply by establishing the Grand Rapids Affordable Housing Fund.

The City Commission also approved an agreement between the City and Grand Rapids Community Foundation (GRCF) that establishes the Grand Rapids Affordable Housing Fund as one of the foundation's non-endowed designated funds.

Established through the work of the City's housing practice leader, Housing Next, the Affordable Housing Fund will help assist low- and moderate-income residents, preserve existing affordable housing, offer gap-financing for new affordable and mixed-income housing development and make bridge loans for acquisition and pre-development costs with nonprofit developers.

"Establishment of the housing fund is a major accomplishment that has been a priority for this Commission," Mayor Rosalynn Bliss said. "This effort is essential as we work to ensure that Grand Rapids remains a desirable and equitable place to live for all. I am grateful for all of our partners, residents, commissioners and city employees who worked hard over the years to make this fund a reality."

The City's fiscal year 2021 budget included an initial investment in the fund of \$875,000, which will be transferred to the Affordable Housing Fund and these funds remain available for this purpose. This represents the amount authorized in the City's fiscal plan, less the \$250,000 already invested in the La Lucha Fund to support the housing needs of undocumented residents of the city during the pandemic.

The Commission also established a fiduciary through the GRCF for stewardship of initial and future dollars dedicated to this purpose. The foundation will manage the Grand Rapids Affordable Housing Fund investments as a non-endowed designated fund, with the Housing Fund Board making all capital spending and distribution decisions.



The Affordable Housing Fund board will consist of 11 members of the community with experience related to housing, finance, residential development, health and well-being, lived experience, social work, philanthropy and impact investing. Representative of the racial/ethnic makeup of the community.

The Affordable Housing Fund board will make all spending and distribution decisions in the form of recommendations to the City Commission designed to make housing more accessible to residents of the city. It will evaluate and determine property acquisition, preservation and pre-development loan funds for qualified and experienced nonprofit housing partners. It also is also empowered to support gap financing to support mixed-income, nonprofit and for-profit development projects that include affordable housing, as well as income-qualified homeowner assistance grants/loans to support necessary repairs, reduced energy costs and climate resilience and additions for accessory dwelling units.

Gap financing will also be offered to development projects that receive money from state or federal funding

or equity investment. The Affordable Housing Fund board could also consider potential direct investment of a projected \$5 million in ARPA funds as envisioned in the FY2022 Fiscal Plan as may be allowed under Federal rules to stimulate development or preservation of affordable housing now.

The concept of establishing a Housing Fund first emerged from work on Great Housing Strategies in 2015 and carried through to the recommendations of Housing Now! In late 2018 and early 2019, the City halted plans to establish a fund due to a variety of circumstances – primary among them was the closure of the Kent County Land Bank Authority and the need to align housing strategy with the City's strategic plan that was under development.

In 2019, the City contracted with Housing Next to help establish a Housing Fund that aligns with the City's adopted strategic plan. The plan's economic prosperity and affordability priority includes an objective that "supports housing development and services that help keep people in their homes."

## GRPD Offers New Incentives for Experienced Officers; Hiring Opportunities in 2022

Do you know someone working in law enforcement in another community who wants to come home to Grand Rapids? The department has new hiring incentives for experienced police officers and academy graduates. Officers with at least one year of prior experience now will be offered employment at the GRPD pay rate corresponding to their full years of experience, up to five years.

Grand Rapids is consistently rated among the best cities in America for living, working, and raising a family. Couple that with the department's values of service, equity, integrity and accountability and you have an outstanding opportunity for officers who want both quality of life and a progressive, professional departmental culture.

"Our officers enjoy being part of this exceptional community," said Police Chief Eric Payne. "I've been blessed to work here for over 30 years and to raise my family here."

Sergeant Henry McCullough considers himself fortunate to patrol the same streets he grew up on. After being raised on the city's south side, Henry put himself through the police academy and then worked for the Battle Creek Police Department. But Grand Rapids was always home.

"I drove back and forth to Battle Creek from Grand Rapids because I always wanted to raise my family where I

grew up," McCullough stated. "Now I get to make a difference in the same neighborhoods where I met some great cops and fell in love with public safety."

Sergeant Joe Drelles offers a similar perspective. "Being born and raised on the Southeast side of Grand Rapids, it was always a goal of mine to work for the city I grew up in," Sgt. Drelles said. "My experience growing up here helps me to relate to and understand the people I serve. I was also fortunate enough to bring some of the things I have learned over the years in my law enforcement career back with me to help contribute to the future growth of this organization," he said.

Lieutenant Maureen O'Brien, head of the GRPD's recruiting and hiring, said the department is having success recruiting new officer candidates to sponsor through the academy from its intern program and other youth outreach.

"This new incentive makes us more attractive to police officers with a proven track record who want to bring that experience here. It's no secret that Grand Rapids has so much to offer prospective employees."

Visit [joingrpd.com](http://joingrpd.com) or call (616) 456-3301 to talk with a recruiter about the upcoming hiring cycles in January, May, and August.



## City Offers Leaf Removal Options

### *The burning of leaves or raking leaves into the street is illegal*

The colorful canopy of leaves enhancing Grand Rapids neighborhoods will soon fall to the ground, prompting residents to begin cleaning up yards for winter. As residents break out their rakes, City officials want to remind citizens of the proper way to dispose of leaves.

City residents have several alternatives for cleaning up leaves including:

- Using “Don’t Bag It!” techniques and composting them back into the lawn
- Participating in Grand Rapids’ Yard Waste Program
- Dropping off leaves and other yard waste free of charge at 2001 Butterworth SW

Improper disposal includes:

- Raking leaves and other debris into the street
- Burning or throwing leaves into household trash

#### **Don’t Bag It!**

During the fall and early winter, when lawns stop growing and the rake replaces the lawnmower, tree leaves become a major component of lawn waste. A light covering of leaves can be mowed, leaving shredded leaves on the lawn. This technique is most effective when using a mulching mower. During times of light leaf drop, this technique is probably the most efficient and easiest way to manage leaf accumulation.

Mulching is also a simple and effective way to recycle leaves and improve landscaping. Mulching reduces evaporation from soil surface, inhibits weed growth, moderates soil temperatures, keeps soil from eroding and crusting and prevents soil compaction. Leaves can be used as mulch in vegetable gardens, flower beds, and around shrubs and trees. Mowed and shredded leaves will decompose faster and will be more likely to remain in place than un-shredded leaves.

#### **Grand Rapids Yard Waste Program**

Yard waste may also be disposed through the City of Grand Rapids’ Yard Waste Program. Yard waste collection takes place on the same day as normal refuse collection starting early April through the 2nd Friday in December. The City asks all residents to place their yard waste out to the curb by 7 a.m.

There are three options of yard waste removal within the City:

1. Yard Waste Cart (grass clippings, leaves, etc.)
  - 96 Gallon Cart - \$27.50 one-time charge
  - Yellow Yard Waste Cart Tag - \$6 each time you use the cart.
  - Sign-up by using our City Website or in-person at City Hall, 300 Monroe Avenue NW
2. City Yard Waste Paper Bag (grass clippings, leaves, etc.)
  - \$2.50 each or \$12.50 for a package of five
  - Yard waste materials cannot weigh more than 30 pounds
3. Purple Bulk Yard Waste Tag (bundled branches and twigs)
  - \$2.50 each
  - Bulk yard waste materials must be tagged and tied
  - Yard waste materials cannot weigh more than 30 pounds
  - Bundled yard waste cannot exceed four (4) feet in length and must be under two inches in diameter

City yard waste paper bags and tags may be purchased at the Customer Service Lobby at City Hall, located at 300 Monroe Avenue NW. Many Grand Rapids neighborhood

stores may carry them as well (call ahead before you go). A list of participating stores can be found on the web page linked above.

#### **City Compost Site**

The City of Grand Rapids offers a free drop-off site for yard waste at 2001 Butterworth Avenue SW. The site is free for City residents who provide proof of residency. Acceptable items include leaves, brush and tree branches. The days of operation are Monday through Saturday during the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The site is open from early April through mid-December. Commercial contractors are not allowed to dump for free. However, a contractor can work with our on-site vendor “We Care Denali” to utilize our site by paying a tipping fee.

#### **Never Rake Leaves into the Street**

Public Works Director John Gorney wants to remind citizens that Grand Rapids does not have a leaf vacuuming program like some neighboring communities, and it is important to keep the streets clean of leaves to prevent clogged catch basins. The City does begin street sweeping in November to clear leaves that naturally fall into the roadway, but it is illegal for residents to rake, pile, or blow leaves or tree branches into the streets or storm drains. These activities are a violation of the City Code. Our street sweepers will avoid areas with excessive leaf build up due to illegal activities.

Gorney said moving leaves into the street poses

difficulties for neighbors and the City. “Leaves block storm drains causing ponding, flooding and icing conditions as we move into the winter.”

Residents can assist in resolving these issues by raking leaves that accumulate along their curb and sidewalk throughout the fall. Volunteering and participating in the City’s Basin Buddies Program and adopting a catch basin are great ways to help keep our City beautiful, and storm drains clean.

“If leaves or other debris are blocking a catch basin inlet near your house or business, please remove and dispose of the debris properly,” Gorney said. “In addition, during the winter months, try to maintain the openings to catch basins by clearing away any snow or ice. Your assistance in removing debris from these catch basin openings will greatly reduce ponding water during storm events.”

#### **Never trash or burn your leaves**

Residents are reminded that Michigan law prohibits leaves added to regular trash. It is also against City ordinance to burn leaves. Burning leaves releases large amounts of air pollution, can cause breathing problems for sensitive groups, and lead to long-term health effects.

For additional information about Grand Rapids’ Yard Waste Program or Basin Buddies Program, please visit [grandrapids.mi.gov](http://grandrapids.mi.gov). If you have any questions, please call 311 or dial (616) 456-3000.



**Do you get Emergency Alerts?**  
 Sign up to receive emergency alerts for severe weather and other emergencies at [grandrapidsmi.gov/EmergencyAlerts](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/EmergencyAlerts).

## City Launches Online GR Transportation Resource

A new social media transportation resource can help you navigate Grand Rapids' wide range of transportation options throughout the year. GR Transportation hosts dynamic information of use to both visitors and residents @OnTheGoGR on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Daily posts on mobility, transit, parking, roads, public right of way, safety messaging and more on the three social channels help keep you informed and up to date on how to get around Grand Rapids safely and efficiently.

GR Transportation @OnTheGoGR is a one-stop source for getting around in Grand Rapids – from e-scooters, bike share and other public transportation options to road closures and construction detours and more. Future Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @OnTheGoGR posts also will include topics such as pedestrian and bicycle safety, how to report traffic signal outages, bike lanes, parking and ride share options, DASH routes and more.



## Housing Commission Opens Affordable Housing Development Serving Vulnerable Populations

Our Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) has completed construction of a \$13.5 million affordable housing development that serves our most vulnerable residents. The structure is open to veterans experiencing homelessness, adults ages 55 and older who have disabilities, and seniors ages 62 and older.

Antoine Court Apartments, 901 South Division Avenue, is adjacent to Campau Park and just a half block from public transportation. The development includes 50, 690-square-foot one-bedroom apartments, including five barrier-free units; all units meet accessibility standards and are designed so that they can be converted to barrier free as needed. The building also offers a 1,153 square-foot community room.

Supported by the Section 8 Project-Based Voucher program, Antoine Court offers a preference for veterans referred by the Grand Rapids Vet Center. Eighteen units are reserved for Grand Rapids residents who qualify for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). The PSH program combines housing assistance with supportive services to address the needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness. Referrals to these units are made through the Kent County Continuum of Care. Customized supportive services to meet the needs of each resident are coordinated by GRHC social work professionals in partnership with the Vet Center, health care providers and social services agencies.

Rent for eligible low-income households is no more than 30 percent of adjusted monthly household income. If you are interested in applying to rent an apartment at Antoine Court, get on the development's waiting list by filling out a pre-application form available online the GRHC's website, [grhousing.org](http://grhousing.org).

Antoine Court Apartments was financed, in part, through \$1.4 million in federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits awarded to the GRHC by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority in 2019. The LEED Certified development was designed by Isaac V. Norris & Associates and Triangle Associates was the construction manager/general contractor.



Architect's rendering of Antoine Court Apartments, a 50-unit affordable housing development serving special-needs residents.

# Let's Connect GR!

**GR Connected** is **YOUR** source for neighborhood news and information.

Subscribe to this **FREE** e-newsletter at [grandrapidsmi.gov/GRConnected](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/GRConnected).





## 2 WAYS TO GET ACTIVE THIS SEASON

1

### VIRTUAL FITNESS

**PRICING:**

\$40 per 8-week class  
\$35 per 7-week class

**LOCATION(S):**

Wherever you are!  
Live on secure Zoom video meetings with instructors and participants

2

### IN-PERSON FITNESS

**PRICING:\***

\$40 per 8-week class  
\$35 per 7-week class

**LOCATION(S):**

P&R Studio (201 Market Ave SW)  
P&R Cycling Studio (201 Market Ave SW)  
Garfield Park Gym (2111 Madison Ave SE)  
Baxter Community Center (935 Baxter St SE)

\*Add \$10 for nonresidents

### HOW TO REGISTER



**Register online**  
[grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)



**Register by phone**  
616.456.3696, option #1



**Register in person**  
201 Market Ave SW

## YOGA

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY CLASSES RUN FOR 7-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF OCT 25, ALL OTHER CLASSES RUN FOR 8-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF OCT 25. NO CLASSES THE WEEK OF THANKSGIVING.

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>BASIC YOGA</b> Discover your inner yogi in a class that builds strength and body awareness. Begin with gentle stretching and move to flowing through and holding poses. Class will come to a restful end.	MON	5:30 - 6:25 PM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.
	TUE	6:30 - 7:25 PM	P&R STUDIO	AMY K.
	TUE	7:00 - 7:55 PM	BAXTER CENTER	VALARIE J.
	WED	6:00 - 6:55 PM	VIRTUAL	SARA R.
	SAT	9:00 - 9:55 AM	VIRTUAL	SARA R.
<b>GENTLE YOGA</b> A balanced practice that will center you, leaving your body feeling open and relaxed. Basic poses and a slower flow unlock body tension, strengthen your core and help you tune into personal peace.	TUE	9:15 - 10:10 AM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.
	THU	9:15 - 10:10 AM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.
<b>POWER YOGA</b> This energetic class is designed to build strength, flexibility, and balance! Challenging peak poses, breath to movement flows, and mind body connections will encourage students to find their edge. Modifications are always offered and body awareness is always encouraged.	TUE	6:30 - 7:25 PM	VIRTUAL	SARA R.
<b>SLOW FLOW RESTORATIVE YOGA</b> End your weekend and set the tone for the week ahead with this calming and gentle yoga class. Each class will begin and end with a variety of restorative postures, with a slow yoga flow in between. Find a cozy comfortable space, light a few candles, and grab as many blankets and pillows as you can!	SUN	7:00 - 7:55 PM	VIRTUAL	SARA R.
<b>TAI CHI EASY</b> Practice gentle movement and simple, modified Tai Chi to bring vitality to your mind and body. Combining breathwork and gentle mindful movement, this class will help soothe and rebalance you. Perfect for all levels, can be adapted to a chair.	THU	6:30 - 7:25 PM	P&R STUDIO	ALESHEIA H.
<b>VITAL MOVEMENT</b> Strength, flexibility and balance are vital to our well-being. This class combines yoga stretches and poses (from the chair and standing only), along with light core work. No mat required. Perfect for anyone needing to stretch, improve their range of motion, or modify their practice as they recover from injuries. This class is great for any age, especially those 50+.	WED	9:15 - 10:10 AM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.

## DANCE FITNESS

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY CLASSES RUN FOR 7-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF OCT 25, ALL OTHER CLASSES RUN FOR 8-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF OCT 25. NO CLASSES THE WEEK OF THANKSGIVING.

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr) 

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>BEGINNER BALLROOM DANCING</b> A beginner class targeted toward couples wanting to learn ballroom dancing. Learn the Salsa, Waltz, Foxtrot, East Coast Swing, Cha Cha, Rumba and Tango.	TUE	8:00 - 8:55 PM	P&R STUDIO	BYRON D.
<b>GROOVE</b> Sweat away stress and dance some joy into your heart while following simple steps and easy toning moves. Groove is perfect for anyone who wants to add some fun into their current workout routine.	WED	5:30 - 6:25 PM	VIRTUAL	TERRI S.
<b>HIGH FITNESS</b> HIGH Fitness is an energetic, fun, fitness class that incorporates interval training with pop music, and easy-to-follow fitness choreography. This dance based class produces a high caloric burn and full-body toning through its carefully formulated choreography, alternating between intense cardio peaks and toning tracks. No equipment necessary, and options will be given for all fitness levels.	TUE	5:30 - 6:25	P&R STUDIO	AMANDA B.
<b>WERQ</b> WERQ is a nonstop cardio dance class with fun and unique routines set to the hottest pop and hip hop music. Participants will get a high calorie burn, and a non stop workout, combining repetitive athletic moves with fresh dance steps. Anyone can WERQ it!	WED	6:45 - 7:40 PM	P&R STUDIO	JEANNIE W.
<b>ZUMBA</b> Zumba is a high energy, dance fitness class that incorporates Latin and international music. All fitness levels are welcome.	MON THU	6:30 - 7:25 PM 6:30 - 7:25 PM	P&R STUDIO VIRTUAL	AMY K. & BRI C. AMY K. & BRI C.
<b>ZUMBA TONING</b> Join master Zumba instructor Yeli Romero for an energetic, confidence-building Latin Zumba Fitness Toning class! Expect targeted body-sculpting exercises and high-energy cardio work with Latin-infused Zumba moves to create a calorie-torching, strength-training dance fitness party. This aerobic fitness toning program features movements using light weights (3lbs or less) performed primarily to Latin American dance music. So bring your weights and get ready to tone your arms, core, and lower body. All levels are welcome!	MON	6:00 - 6:55 PM	BAXTER CENTER	YELI R.

## CARDIO & STRENGTH

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY CLASSES RUN FOR 7-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF OCT 25, ALL OTHER CLASSES RUN FOR 8-WEEK SESSIONS STARTING THE WEEK OF OCT 25. NO CLASSES THE WEEK OF THANKSGIVING.

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr) 

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<b>BARRE</b> Barre is a low impact, high intensity total body workout that incorporates elements of Pilates, Ballet and Yoga. This workout is fast paced and set to fun upbeat music. During the workout you will use light hand weights, resistance bands, and your own body weight. You will complete small range movements at high repetitions meant to fatigue your muscles to build strength and endurance, and then stretch everything out to increase your flexibility. Barre is a great workout for any fitness level as there are options to level up or down based on your own body. Barre is for EVERYBODY.	WED	5:45 - 6:40 PM	P&R STUDIO	LENOX N.
<b>CORE CAMP</b> Incorporate weight training and cardio blast intervals to keep your muscles and heart pumping. Combined with today's hottest music, this class is as much fun as it is effective.	TUE	5:30 - 6:25 PM	VIRTUAL	KRISTIN P.
<b>CYCLING</b> Reach your fitness goals while building leg and core strength. Powerful music and pace-setting instruction helps you climb steep hills, move across flat road and master intense intervals	MON WED SAT	6:00 - 6:45 PM 6:00 - 6:45 PM 8:30 - 9:15 AM	P&R CYCLING STUDIO	CAROL S. JULIE S. CAROL S.
<b>PILATES</b> Tone muscles, improve posture and learn flexibility and balance. Focus on moving as one unit with control and grace. Improve circulation, endurance and reduce stress.	WED	5:30 - 6:25 PM	GARFIELD GYM	ZIYAH D.

# CARDIO & STRENGTH (CONT.)

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<p><b>POUND®</b></p> <p>Using Ripstix®, lightly weighted drumsticks engineered specifically for exercising, POUND® transforms drumming into an incredibly effective way of working out. Instead of listening to music, you become the music in this exhilarating full-body workout that combines cardio, conditioning and strength training with yoga and pilates-inspired movements. Designed for all fitness levels, POUND® provides the perfect atmosphere for letting loose, getting energized, toning up and rockin' out! The workout is easily modifiable, and the alternative vibe and welcoming philosophy appeals to men and women of all ages and abilities. POUND® approved sticks required for everyone. Punch card holders must have their own Ripstix®. Ripstix® available at registration for \$20.</p>	THU	5:30 - 6:15 PM	P&R STUDIO	KRISTIN P.
<p><b>RESTORATIVE BARRE</b></p> <p>Combining moves from pilates and yoga, and mixed with traditional strength work and elements from ballet, this is a class suitable for everyBODY. You can expect to start moving slow, building into a deep burn through your core and lower body, then peaking in standing postures that heat the body. Class ends with stillness and stretching. Move with intention, and peacefully reset your mind and body. Participants will need a yoga mat or soft surface.</p>	THU	7:30 - 8:15 PM	VIRTUAL	KELLY B.
<p><b>NEW! SOULFUL MOTION</b></p> <p>SoulfulMotion is an exciting class of fitness and inspiration. This is a high intensity interval training (HIIT) class set to Christian and inspirational music. Designed for anyone regardless of age or fitness level.</p>	MON	6:15 - 7:10 PM	GARFIELD GYM	MARIE R.
<p><b>STRENGTH+POWER</b></p> <p>This laser-focused strength class will work all your muscle groups with a variety of exercises to elevate your current routine. It will combine compound exercises to engage as many muscles as possible in a single move, as well as incorporate isolation moves. Modifications and challenges will be offered to make the class appropriate for all levels. Bring your own water bottle, towel &amp; mat.</p>	MON	5:30 - 6:25 PM	P&R STUDIO	AMANDA B.
<p><b>STRONG NATION</b></p> <p>Strong Nation is a HIIT class (High Intensity Interval Training) that includes body weight strength exercises, fast cardio moves, plyometrics, and agility training. Music and moves sync together to help push you past your limits to reach your fitness goals.</p>	WED	6:30 - 7:25 PM	VIRTUAL	AMY K.
<p><b>STRONG30</b></p> <p>STRONG30 packs a total body workout into 30 minutes. It combines HIIT (high intensity interval training), body weight exercises, and cardio moves. In every class, the music and moves sync together in a way to help push you past your limits and reach your fitness goals.</p>	SAT	9:00 - 9:30 AM	VIRTUAL	AMY K.



**FREE!**

## PROGRAMS FOR AGES 50+

At Garfield Park Community Gym  
(2111 Madison Ave SE)

Programs for ages 50+ are back! Classes are ongoing and run Monday through Thursday from 10 am - 2 pm. All programs are **free** and open to the public.

Visit [grandrapidsmi.gov/recreation](http://grandrapidsmi.gov/recreation) or call 616-456-3696 for more information.

**Programs include:**

- Active Adults
- Stretch and Flex
- Pickleball
- Walking Club
- Knitting Club
- And more!

# YOUTH ENRICHMENT

Register online: [grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/recgr)

CLASS	DAY(S)	TIME(S)	LOCATION(S)	INSTRUCTOR
<p><b>NEW! BRICKS 4 KIDZ: MINING &amp; CRAFTING CLASS (GRADES K-5)</b> Minecraft is a game about placing blocks to build anything you can imagine. At night monsters come out, so players need to make sure to build a shelter before that happens. Experience the world of Minecraft with LEGO® bricks in this fun after school enrichment class.</p> <p>Kids will start by crafting their shelters, critters and tools using LEGO® bricks. Students will face new challenges each day, building moving technic models and crafting key elements from the popular Minecraft game.</p>	OCT 20 & 27	5:30 - 6:45 PM	201 MARKET AVE	PIATT BRICKZ, LLC.
<p><b>NEW! BRICKS 4 KIDZ: VEHICLE ADVENTURE ROBOTICS (GRADES 3-5)</b> From Siri to Alexa, robots are part of our day to day lives! This two-week introduction will give kids the opportunity to build and program vehicle-themed robots with LEGO bricks.</p> <p>Using LEGO bricks and WeDo 2.0 software we will build an airplane and a delivery truck and code them to move according to our directions. No experience required!</p>	OCT 21 & 28	5:30 - 6:45 PM	201 MARKET AVE	PIATT BRICKZ, LLC.

## WINTER ACTIVITIES IN GRAND RAPIDS PARKS

Did you know our City parks stay open all year? You can enjoy parks from sunrise to sunset every day. Read below for our favorite winter activities for a Grand Rapids winter.



### SLEDDING

Sledding has always been a favorite winter pastime for families. If you don't have a sled, we rent them for free on select days. Our favorite sledding hills in parks are:

#### Highland Park (700 College Ave NE)

Parking lot off Grand Ave is open and plowed.

#### Mary Waters Park (1042 Lafayette Ave NE)

Parking lot off Lafayette Ave is open and plowed

#### Mulick Park (1632 Sylvan Ave SE)

Gate is open, parking lot is not plowed

#### Plaster Creek Family Park (2401 Buchanan Ave SW)

Entrance off Stafford Ave is open, parking lot is not plowed

#### Richmond Park (1101 Richmond St NW)

Main parking lot off Richmond Ave is open and plowed

### HIKING & OUTDOOR EXPLORATION

Winter hiking can be a relaxing escape from the City and no snow is required! The following parks are great for taking in natural winter beauty across Grand Rapids:

#### Riverside Park (2001 Monroe Ave NE)

- Miles of trails: 2.3
- Surface: Paved
- Trail Plowed: Yes

#### Aman Park (0-1859 Lake Michigan Dr NW)

- Miles of trails: 6.4
- Surface: Natural
- Trail Plowed: No

#### Burton Woods (2259 Everest Ave SE)

- Miles of trails: 0.4
- Surface: Natural
- Trail Plowed: No

#### Ken-O-Sha Park (1353 Van Auken St SE)

- Miles of trails: 2.7
- Surface: Natural and Paved
- Trail Plowed: No

#### Huff Park (2399 Ball Ave NE)

- Miles of trails: 1.0
- Surface: Paved and Boardwalk
- Trail Plowed: No

#### Ball Perkins Park (1675 Perkins Ave NE)

- Miles of trails: 0.7
- Surface: Natural
- Trail Plowed: No

#### Grand River Walk (from Sixth Street Park to Leonard St.)

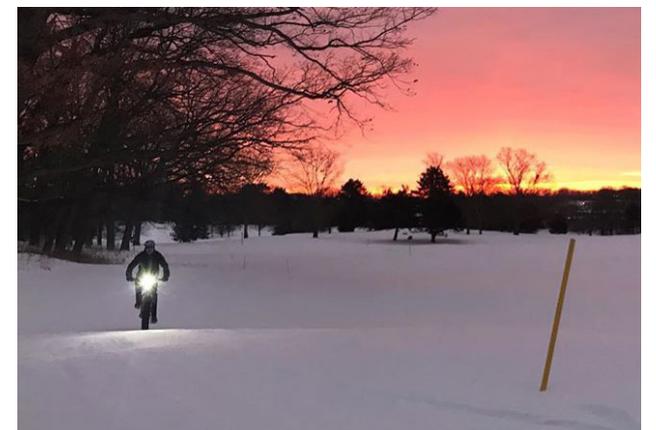
- Miles of trails: 0.7
- Surface: Paved
- Trail Plowed: Yes



### SKIING, SNOWSHOEING & BIKING

Even in the off-season, our City-owned Indian Trails Golf Course (2776 Kalamazoo Ave SE) is active! We offer fat tire biking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing around the course all winter. Don't have equipment? We rent snowshoes for \$3.

The winter season at Indian Trails will begin December 1, weather permitting.



LEARN MORE ABOUT ALL THERE IS  
TO DO THIS WINTER AT  
[GRANDRAPIDSMI.GOV/WINTERFUN](https://grandrapidsmi.gov/winterfun)

## Visit any of the Grand Rapids Public Library's 8 locations

### Main Library

111 Library Street NE ■ 49503  
616.988.5400

### Madison Square Branch

1201 Madison SE ■ 49507  
616.988.5411

### Ottawa Hills Branch

1150 Giddings SE ■ 49506  
616.988.5412

### Seymour Branch

2350 Eastern SE ■ 49507  
616.988.5413

### Van Belkum Branch

1563 Plainfield NE ■ 49505  
616.988.5410

### West Leonard Branch

1017 Leonard NW ■ 49504  
616.988.5416

### West Side Branch

713 Bridge NW ■ 49504  
616.988.5414

### Yankee Clipper Branch

2025 Leonard NE ■ 49505  
616.988.5415

For more information and hours,  
visit [www.grpl.org](http://www.grpl.org).



616.988.5400 ■ [www.grpl.org](http://www.grpl.org)

## GRPL Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

### Latinos and the Fight for Equitable Education in Grand Rapids and Michigan

Wednesday, October 27 | 6:00 pm  
Virtual Event – GRPL's Facebook Page

MSU professor Delia Fernández will explore the history of Latinos in Grand Rapids, and the difficulties faced when reaching for access to an equitable education.

### Latinx Figures Craft Kits

Stop by and pick up a free craft kit! These take-home kits include age-appropriate crafts and coloring pages for kids, and have helpful inserts to help parents and kids get to know four different Latinx figures: Roberto Clemente, Celia Cruz, Ellen Ochoa, and Cesar Chavez. Craft kits can be picked up at any GRPL location.

### Día de los Muertos/ Honoring Day of the Dead

Celebrate Día de los Muertos with GRPL! Día de los Muertos is a Mexican holiday that honors family and friends who have passed on. Our Día de los Muertos celebration looks a little different this year, but we will still be sharing altars and learning together. Join us!

### Public Día de los Muertos Altars

Monday, October 25 – Wednesday, November 3 | During open hours  
Madison Square Branch – 1201 Madison SE  
Main Library – 111 Library St NE  
Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities  
Cook Library Center –  
1100 Grandville Ave SW

Experience altars created by talented artist Reyna García. The altars highlight the significance of the Día de los Muertos celebration within some of our Hispanic cultures. Printed educational material will be available for everyone who visits the altars.



### Create an altar

#### Community Altar Showcase

Show us your Día de los Muertos altar! Post a photo of your ofrenda on Facebook or Instagram with a brief description of the family member or friend you are honoring. Tag @GrandRapidsPublicLibrary for a chance to have your altar featured on our social media channels!



### Pick Up an Altar Kit

Parents and teachers, build an educational altar kit with your kids! Altar kits are available to pick up at all GRPL locations and at the Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities September 27 – October 30 while supplies last! Limit one kit per family or classroom.

### GRPL celebra la Herencia Hispana

#### Latinos y La lucha por una educación equitativa en Grand Rapids y Michigan

Miércoles, 27 de Octubre | 6:00 pm  
Evento Virtual | Página Facebook de la GRPL

La profesora de la Universidad del Estado de Michigan, Delia Fernández, explorará la historia de los latinos en Grand Rapids y las dificultades que enfrentan para lograr el acceso a una educación equitativa.

#### Kits de artesanía para figuras latinas

Pasen y recojan un kit de artesanía gratis. Estos kits para llevar a casa incluyen artesanías y páginas para colorear apropiadas para la edad de los niños, y tienen insertos útiles para ayudar a los padres y a los niños a conocer cuatro figuras latinas diferentes. Se pueden recoger los kits de artesanías en cualquier ubicación de la GRPL.

### Honrando el Día de los Muertos

¡Celebren el Día de los Muertos con la Biblioteca Pública de Grand Rapids! El Día de los Muertos es un día feriado mexicano que honra a los familiares y amigos fallecidos. Nuestra celebración del Día de los Muertos tiene un aspecto un poco diferente este año, pero siempre vamos a estar compartiendo altares y aprendiendo juntos. ¡Únanse ustedes a nosotros!

#### Altares públicos del Día de los Muertos

Lunes, 25 de Octubre – miércoles, 3 de Noviembre | durante el horario de servicio  
Sucursal Madison Square – 1201 Madison SE  
Biblioteca Principal – 111 Library St NE  
Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities  
Cook Library Center –  
1100 Grandville Ave SW

Experimenten altares creados por la artista talentosa Reyna García. Los altares resaltan la importancia de la celebración del Día de los Muertos dentro de algunas de nuestras culturas hispanas. Habrá material educativo impreso disponible para todos los que visiten los altares.

### Crea un Altar

#### Exhibición de altares comunitarios

Pongan una foto de su ofrenda en Facebook o Instagram con una breve descripción del familiar o amigo que estén honrando. Etiqueten [Tag] @GrandRapidsPublicLibrary para tener la oportunidad de que su altar aparezca en nuestros canales de medios sociales.

#### Recoge un kit de altar

Padres de familia y maestros, ¡construyan un kit de altar educativo con sus niños! ¡Los kits de altar están disponibles para recogerlos en todas las ubicaciones de la GRPL y en Artes y Humanidades de la Avenida Grandville del 27 de septiembre al 30 de octubre hasta agotar existencias!

## Seniors Be Well at GRPL

Join us for the Seniors Be Well at GRPL series! We'll discuss health misinformation, nutrition, community resources for caregivers, and more. When you sign up for the book club, you will receive the book to read, discuss, and keep for your personal library! The series will move online if necessary for public health and patron safety. These materials were provided by a generous grant from the National Library of Medicine. Seniors Be Well at GRPL is a partnership with Mercy Health Saint Mary's

### Ways to sign up:

1. Online – [www.grpl.org/seniorsbewell](http://www.grpl.org/seniorsbewell)
2. In Person – Visit any GRPL location
3. On the phone 616-988-5400

### Addressing Health Misinformation (Vaccines and Much More) and Scams Targeting Seniors

Thursday, October 28, 2021

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

11:00 am | Presentation by Renah Farhan MD, Cassie Caple, Elder Abuse Coalition

12:30 pm | Exercise Class

2:00 pm | Book Club on *Complications* by Atul Gawande

### Community Resources for Caregivers, and Dementia vs. Normal Memory Loss

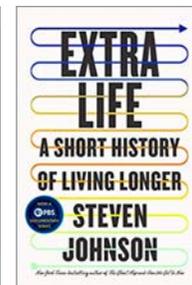
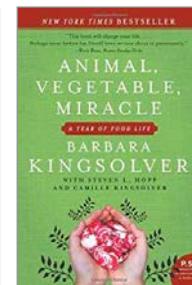
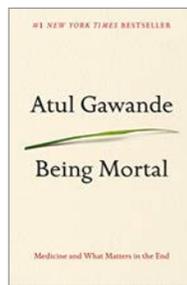
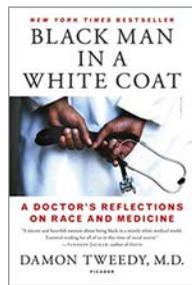
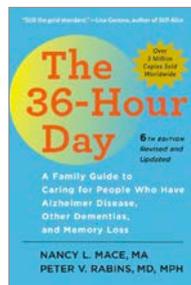
Thursday, November 18, 2021

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

11:00 am | Presentation by Rachael Plantholt MD, Anna Ramos, Alzheimer's Association

12:30 pm | Exercise Class

2:00 pm | Book Club on *The 36 Hour Day* by Nancy Mace and Peter Rabins



### Preventing and Managing your Type II Diabetes and Heart Disease

Thursday, December 16, 2021

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

11:00 am | Presentation by Stephany Zahl MD, Vanessa Green, African American Health Institute

12:30 pm | Exercise Class

2:00 pm | Book Club on *Black Man in a*

*White Coat* by Damon Tweedy MD

6:00 pm | *Black Men in White Coats*

Documentary

### Ask-a-Doctor and Ask-a-Lawyer about Advance Care Planning

Thursday, January 20, 2022

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

11:00 am | Presentation by Claire Belevender MD, Gregory Hodge, Elder Law Firm PC

12:30 pm | Exercise Class

2:00 pm | Book Club on *Being Mortal*

by Atul Gawande

### Grief, Stress Management, and Mood (Mental Health Issues)

Thursday, February 24, 2022

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

11:00 am | Presentation by Sarna Becker MD

12:30 pm | Exercise Class

2:00 pm | Book Club on *The Year of*

*Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion

### Decreased Appetite, Nutrition, and Fall Prevention

Thursday, March 24, 2022

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

11:00 am | Presentation by Nolan Coallier MD

12:30 pm | Exercise Class

2:00 pm | Book Club on *Animal,*

*Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver

### Senior Preventative Care and Community Health Resources

Thursday, April 21, 2022

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

11:00 am | Presentation by Kellie Clark MD, Stephanie Hecksel,

& Area Agency on Aging

Yankee Clipper Branch – 2025 Leonard NE

12:30 pm | Exercise Class

2:00 pm | Book Club on *Extra Life: Short*

*History of Living Longer* by Steven Johnson

### Caregiver Expo

Saturday, April 24, 2022

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

1:00 – 5:00 pm

- Family Medicine Residents
- Senior Neighbors
- Area Agency on Aging West Michigan
- Alzheimer's Association
- Elder Abuse Coalition
- Hope Network Side by Side Day Program
- Home Repair Services
- Legal Aid of West Michigan
- Michigan Medicare/Medicaid
- African American Health Institute
- Elder Law Firm
- Faith Hospice
- Red Cross



## Free Early Literacy Programs for Kids

### Fall Fun on the Lawn

Bundle up and join the fun! Come sing, dance, and play outside on the lawn. For ages 0 – 5. Weather permitting.

Mondays, October 4 – 25

10:30 am | Main Library – 111 Library St NE

Wednesdays, October 6 – November 10

10:30 am | Seymour Branch – 2350 Eastern SE

Thursdays, October 7 – November 11

10:30 am | Yankee Clipper Branch  
2025 Leonard NE



### Social Justice Begins With Me Book Club

Each month, the Social Justice Begins with Me book club examines a different social justice topic.

Children ages 4-8 listen to a book read by a volunteer and discuss the month's social justice topics in small groups.

Children ages 9-11 will read books in advance and discuss the books as a group. All participants will enjoy a snack and themed craft activity.

Registration recommended:

[www.grpl.org/SJBookClub](http://www.grpl.org/SJBookClub)

Saturday, November 13 | 10:30 am

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

November's theme: Economic Justice

Saturday, December 11 | 10:30 am

Main Library – 111 Library St NE

December's theme: Racial Justice

## BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

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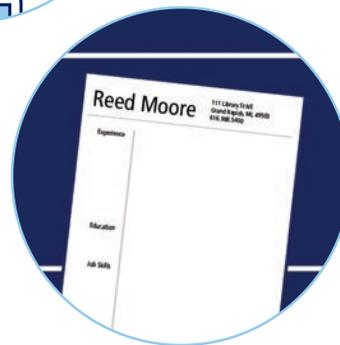
616.988.5400 • WWW.GRPL.ORG

# The Grand Rapids Public Library offers personalized assistance and services, all for free!



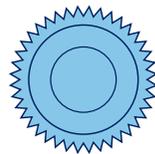
### Get One-on-One Technology Help.

Find individual assistance in learning: basic computers, Internet, email, word processing, eBooks, spreadsheets, and library resources. Call 616-988-5400 to set up an appointment.



### Receive help with your resume.

The Grand Rapids Public Library is here to help you put your best foot forward with Remote Resume Review. Simply load your resume in the form on our website, [www.grpl.org](http://www.grpl.org), or drop off a paper copy at any of our locations. Trained library staff will review your resume and give tips to improve content, format, and effectiveness. Please allow two weeks time for review.



### Have a document notarized.

Call 616-988-5400 to set up an appointment.



### Print, scan, fax or copy up to 50 pages a week for free.

## Digital Database Spotlight: Do It Yourself

Looking for a new crafting hobby? Need advice on a home improvement project? You may find your answer using one of GRPL's databases. Library card users get free access! Visit [www.grpl.org/databases](http://www.grpl.org/databases) to get started.



### CreativeBug

- Streaming video library of 1000+ award-winning art & craft classes
- Topics include drawing, knitting, cake decorating, paper folding, home decor, and more
- Inspiration for the entire family

### Small Engine Repair Reference Center

- This reference database provides detailed yet user-friendly repair guides for all manner of small engines
- A full collection of Clymer repair manuals, with new and updated content added regularly
- Coverage of more than 90,000 repairs

### Home Improvement Reference Center

- Through a collection of comprehensive full-text content, this database provides "how-to" information covering a variety of home improvement and repair projects
- Full-text reference books, including major reference works from Creative Publishing International
- 35,000 images not available anywhere else online
- Nearly 100 videos of popular home repair projects
- A convenient A-Z browsing tool for searching

### Hobbies & Crafts Reference Center

- This database offers detailed "how-to" instructions and creative ideas to meet the interests of virtually every hobby enthusiast
- Full text is provided from leading hobby and craft magazines

## Digital Exhibit Explores the History of GRPL

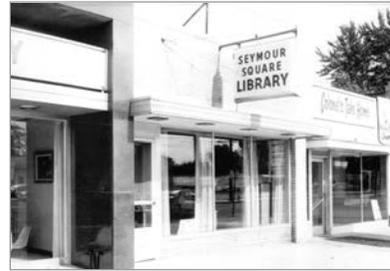
As part of GRPL's 150th anniversary celebration, the Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department created an online exhibit about the history of each of the branches. Full of historic photos and stories, the exhibit shows how much the library has grown in the last 150 years. View the complete exhibit at [digital.grpl.org](http://digital.grpl.org).

Here are some quick facts about the history of GRPL:

- In December 1968, the Madison Square Branch debuted as a semi-permanent mobile library. It was located at the intersection of Madison and Pleasant. For the next two decades, mobile branches and bookmobiles provided library services to the neighborhood.
- On November 13, 1871, the Grand Rapids Public Library was founded when the Board of Education, the Ladies Literary Association and the YMCA combined forces and book holdings. The new library began with more than 4,000 volumes and served 16,000 Grand Rapiidians. The library grew rapidly in its first several years. It moved from rooms over H. Leonard and Sons dry goods store, to the second floor of the new Ledyard Building, and then to City Hall. By 1888, the library served a population of 90,000

with 35,000 volumes in its collection. Cardholders were allowed to check out only one book at a time and only two books per week.

- The Ottawa Hills Branch opened in 1957. It featured a large collection of books, air conditioning, stuffed chairs, and even a smoking section.



- The Seymour Branch was opened in 1963, with the current building constructed in 2000. The roots of the branch date to 1960, when a citizen group formed called the Southeast Library Board. The group campaigned to create a library in the Alger Heights neighborhood. They raised money for the branch with the slogan: "Every citizen in the city of Grand Rapids should live within walking distance to a neighborhood branch."



- On December 29, 1943, a special report presented at the Library Commissioners Board Meeting suggested that the library needed to improve service to its patrons by having more locations. After analyzing the locations of all public, Christian, and Parochial schools, as well as residential patterns in Grand Rapids, the report lists five potential branch locations. The first location mentioned is at the intersection of Coit Ave. NE and Plainfield Ave. NE, as the intersection is equidistant from Creston High, Creston Christian, St. Alphonsus, and East Leonard Schools. On February 15, 1944, the Board of Library Commissioners authorized the first floor of 1501 Plainfield Ave. NE be rented for sixteen and a half months at a monthly rental rate of \$70 per month to form the Creston Branch Library.
- Our West Leonard Branch occupies a space that originally housed a Mr. Fables restaurant.
- The West Side Branch opened in December of 1907 and was the first library branch specifically built by GRPL to be a library. To begin its collection, the West Side Branch transferred books from the Ryerson building, a large portion of which were Polish and German language books. In 1924, as the population in the West Side neighborhood expanded, a new building was erected to better serve the community. The new location housed "two miles" of books (around 80,000 books) and 20,000 feet of floor space as well as multiple reading rooms.
- The Yankee Clipper Branch got its name from the shopping complex—the Yankee Shopping Plaza—where the bookmobile first made stops. "Clipper" refers to this location's origin as a library in motion. Fun fact: The clipper ship was a popular 19th century sailing vessel admired for its speed and beauty. You can see the sailing influences in the architecture of the branch.

## Don't miss out on these free services with your Grand Rapids Public Library card



- Up to 50 pages of free printing, faxing, copying and scanning per week
- Borrow the Internet—check out a hotspot for free Internet access at home or on the go
- Stream movies, TV shows, music, and audiobooks
- Check out passes to visit area museums, botanical gardens, and live theatre, music, and dance performances
- Free rides to and from the library on The Rapid
- Research your family history with Ancestry.com and other genealogy databases
- Free test prep material
- Digital and physical newspapers and magazines
- Much, much more!



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR! School Choice Expo and Fall Harvest Festival

Thursday, November 4, 4:30 - 6:30 pm  
@ Ottawa Hills High School Gymnasium

Learn more about your neighborhood and theme school choices (see page 3)

October 2021 | Section B

School Choice Info: 3

Early Childhood: 10

2021 Turkey Trot: 16

### Unearthing History: Former Principal Collects Artifacts From Old Central High School

*Preservation project highlights graduates famous and obscure*

*By Charles Honey, Courtesy of School News Network*

They call it the dungeon — a cramped, musty storage room in the bowels of Innovation Central High School. Cramped against a moldy brick wall are four metal file cabinets stacked with mildewed boxes. It seems an unlikely treasure trove of history, but inside those cabinets are the records of every Central High School student from 1892 to 1939 — including a former first lady.

Mark Frost, the school's recently retired principal, went into those cabinets to dig out the record from grades 7 through 12 of Elizabeth Bloomer, a 1936 graduate, after a Central alumnus called him and pleaded, "Don't throw Betty Ford away!"

Frost has meticulously preserved the records and yearbook of Ford — who served with distinction alongside President Gerald R. Ford — along with many other precious artifacts of the historic high school, now called Innovation Central. Before taking leave of Central, Frost spent weeks this summer locating, organizing and preserving historical materials scattered through the stately old school on Heritage Hill.

"It was bugging me," said Frost, a former history teacher. "There's some things you can't leave in disarray here."

Instead, he left an array of Central yearbooks called Helios — the Greek sun god — dating from 1892 and neatly stacked on shelves behind the library, covering every year except 1999 and 2008 (the latter was published on CD). Also stored there are elegant monthly Helios booklets of student artwork, writings and activities.

Frost also framed elaborately decorated diplomas and antique photos, and lovingly displayed artifacts such as a 1953 silver tea set donated by the school's Classical Club. Culled from nooks and crannies of the 1910-built school over Frost's nine years there, the historical items tell of Central's rich history during this 150th anniversary year of Grand Rapids Public Schools.

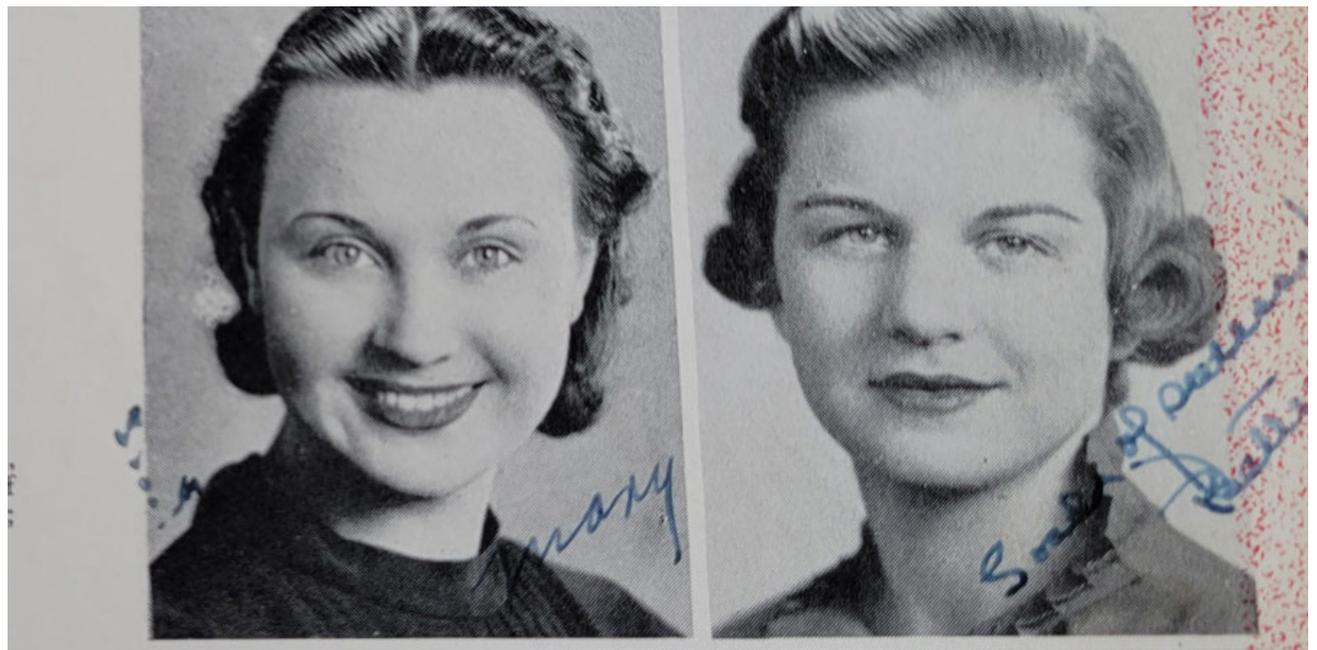
#### Rich Legacy of Alumni

Some of the materials have since been taken into the City of Grand Rapids Archives and Records Center, including digitized Central yearbooks from 1895 and 1944. Frost has volunteered to help the archive scan in other yearbooks and school records.

For him, collecting and organizing pieces of Central's history has been a true labor of love as well as scholarly interest.

"I just like history," said Frost, who taught the subject at City High Middle School, while showing a reporter around the Central "museum." "Every time I give a tour of this place, I feel like I'm a docent."

Central's lifeblood, of course, has been the thousands of students who have walked its halls dating back to earlier buildings



Betty Ford in high school: the former first lady, right, in the 1936 Central High yearbook, when she was named Elizabeth Bloomer.

in the mid-19th century, and the teachers who schooled them. Among the latter were Mary Powers, Ralph Conger and Charles Newcomer — all Central grads in whose honor three seniors each year receive \$100 decades later. Frost compiled brief bios of them.

Some of the school's many noteworthy alumni are honored with bronze plaques in its front hallway, outside the auditorium named after Betty Ford (see box). Among the most famous alums was Roger B. Chaffee, an astronaut who died in 1967 in a fire during a pre-launch simulation of the Apollo 1 flight. Scholarships in his name have been awarded to Kent ISD graduates ever since.

But Frost also preserved mementos of less well-known grads. There is a lovely senior year booklet of one Margaret Phillips, Class of 1916, and the framed 1909 diploma of Helen Cook, donated by her family.

#### The Most Famous Grad

Of course, most luminous of the alums is Ford, shown in her 1936 yearbook as active in vaudeville, "sock and buskin" (theater), French club and the yearbook ad staff. An aspiring dancer who later performed under the legendary Martha Graham, her motto is given as "Come trip it lightly as you go on the light fantastic toe." Apparently her passion for dance was not matched by her

■ CONTINUES ON B2



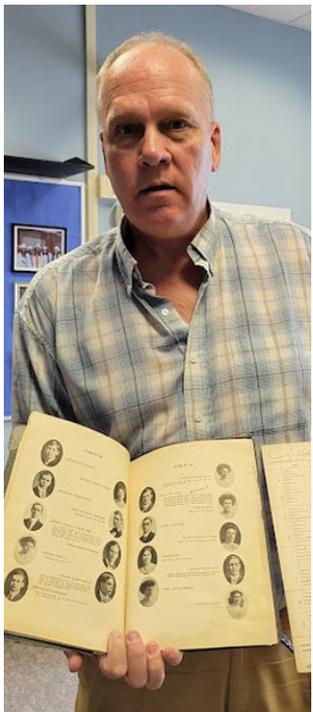
A photo display of Roger B. Chaffee, the late Apollo astronaut and one of Central's most famous alumni.

## Unearthing History CONTINUED FROM B1

studies, as her academic record is not sterling, with high marks in math and history but mediocre grades in English and French. Frost frames her story in a positive way to students, telling them that over time and with hard work, “You can rise to the top.”

One person who’s pleased with the historical work Frost has done is David Thompson, the 1952 graduate who urged him not to discard any materials about Betty Ford. A former executive director of the Grand Rapids Education Association, he was friends with President Ford as well as with Chaffee, and helped fund a downtown statue of the late astronaut.

“I’m impressed, as are my classmates,” Thompson said of Frost’s efforts to help preserve Central’s storied history. “We got an absolutely first-class education there.”



Recently retired Principal Mark Frost with the yearbook and academic record of Helen Cook, a 1909 graduate.



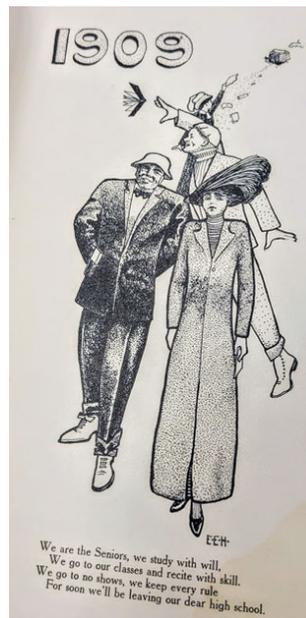
The cover of a 1916 senior year memory book owned by Margaret Phillips.

Some of Central High School’s most noteworthy graduates are honored with plaques in the front hallway. They include:

- Civic activist Dorothy Leonard Judd, 1915
- Grocery magnate L.V. Eberhard, 1922
- Judge Stuart Hoffius, Class of 1931
- Philanthropist Edith Blodgett, 1934
- Judge Douglas Hillman, 1940
- Actress Elizabeth Wilson, 1940
- Old Kent Bank President Richard Gillette, 1941
- Children’s services advocate Henry Saverson, 1949
- Detroit Lions football star Terry Barr, 1953
- Pastor and state representative Robert Dean, 1972
- City Police Chief Kevin Belk, 1977



This statue of Abraham Lincoln, donated by the Class of 1922, keeps watch in Central’s front hallway.



A page from the 1909 yearbook’s monthly edition.



Helen Cook’s 1909 diploma, framed in the school’s front office.



Instruments from the school’s old science lab on display in the principal’s office.



This elegant tea set, arrayed in the principal’s office, was donated by the school Classical Club in 1953.



Standout athletes pictured in Margaret Phillips’ 1916 memory book.

## Grand Rapids Public Schools

### WE ARE GR

#### October 2021 Grand Rapids Board of Education

Jen Schottke, *President*  
Kimberley Williams, *Vice President*  
Katherine Downes Lewis, *Secretary*  
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*Superintendent of Schools*

Equal Opportunity Institution: Grand Rapids Public Schools, as an Equal Opportunity Institution, complies with federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment, including Title IV and Title VII (with amendments) of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974 as amended 38 USC 20-12 and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. The District will not discriminate against any person based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, height, weight, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, disability or veteran status. The District’s Civil Rights Compliance Officer is Sharron Pitts. Ms. Pitts may be contacted at 1331 Franklin SE, P.O. Box 117, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-0117, (616) 819-2030 or (616) 819-2028. The District’s Title IX Coordinator is Kurt Johnson. Mr. Kurt Johnson may be contacted at 1331 Franklin SE, P.O. Box 117, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-0117 or (616) 819-6339 or [titleix@grps.org](mailto:titleix@grps.org).

Title IX Annual Athletics Compliance Report: Grand Rapids Public Schools is committed to securing athletic equity and provides annual Title IX reporting to the athletes and parents in an effort to bring increased attention and resources towards ensuring that gender equity as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments for 1972, Grand Rapids Public Schools annual report is available at [www.grps.org](http://www.grps.org).

To comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), parents may request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student’s classroom teachers.

Please contact Micky Savage, Director of Human Resources, in Human Resources via email [savagem@grps.org](mailto:savagem@grps.org) or at (616) 819-2028.

### WE ARE GR

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# SCHOOL CHOICE EXPO & **FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL**

**THURSDAY  
NOVEMBER 4, 2021  
4:30 - 6:30 PM**

**Ottawa Hills High School**

2055 Rosewood Ave. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49506

- ✓ **Learn more** about school choices and the school enrollment process
- ✓ **Visit with** principals, administrators, and staff from ALL GRPS schools
- ✓ **Enjoy FREE** dinner, giveaways, and fun games & activities

**For more information  
visit [grps.org](https://www.grps.org).**



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my choice®  
Grand Rapids Public Schools



## 40+ SCHOOLS. ONE DISTRICT. YOUR CHOICE!

GRPS is proud to offer the region's largest, most comprehensive selection of school choices in all of West Michigan including neighborhood schools, theme schools, and more. With over 40 schools in one dynamic district, we take pride in preparing our students for the real world.

>> The 2022-2023 **Theme School Application** and **Neighborhood Intent to Enroll Form** open Monday, November 1, 2021.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO  
**APPLY TO A THEME SCHOOL**  
OR VISIT [APPLY.GRPS.ORG](https://apply.grps.org)



SCAN THE QR CODE TO SUBMIT THE  
**NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL INTENT TO  
ENROLL FORM**



**ABERDEEN SCHOOL (PK-8)** is a neighborhood school that offers a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere to support all students in meeting their goals.



**ALGER MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)** is a strong educational institution that has teachers who are committed to student achievement and student social emotional growth. Students are a diverse group of exciting learners who look for achievement at the highest level.



>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**BLANDFORD SCHOOL (6)** offers outdoor learning experiences and a rigorous curriculum that helps students achieve academic excellence through dedication, creativity, and teamwork. The classroom at Blandford is as much in the ponds, streams, woods, and fields as it is in the school building.



**BROOKSIDE ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** combines a strong academic program with a consistent behavioral focus. It is located in southeast Grand Rapids next to the Gerald R. Ford Nature Center and the Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center.



**BUCHANAN ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** provides services and support to English learners. The bilingual transition team works with students and communicates with families to ensure all parents have the opportunity to be involved in their child's education, regardless of their native language.



**BURTON ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** provides education that expands beyond the four walls of our classrooms. Teachers facilitate this exploration with excitement and enthusiasm while administrators support English learners.

MAKE GRPS **YOUR** CHOICE!



**BURTON MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)** promotes a diverse, respectful community of academic achievement by involving students, parents, and community in the learning process.



>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**CA FROST ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE ACADEMY ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** is designed to offer an experiential, hands-on approach for students interested in environmental science. By exposing students to the mysteries and wonders of nature, we encourage our students' natural curiosity and motivation to learn.



>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**CA FROST ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE ACADEMY MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL (6-12)** students are exposed to the mysteries and wonders of nature. We encourage students' natural curiosity and motivation to learn. All students participate in a weekly environmental lab class, better known as "e-lab". E-lab is project-based and helps students become independent problem solvers who care for our planet.



**CAMPUS ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** strives to provide a culture of learning where students and families feel welcomed, supported, and are given the best opportunities to feel successful in both academics and in life.



center of economicology

>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**CENTER FOR ECONOMICOLGY (6)** is a combination of the words "economy" and "ecology". Coined by Peter Wege, the term advocates for reasoned, respectful, and engaged stewardship of the Earth in service of both people and the planet. Our six guiding philosophies are ecology, economics, empathy, environment, ethics, and education.



**CESAR E. CHAVEZ ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** unites to create and maintain a high quality and safe learning environment enabling each child to exceed at their own expectations within our school and community. We are a modern neighborhood school that celebrates diversity and provides assistance to English learners to ensure academic success.



>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**CITY HIGH MIDDLE SCHOOL (7-12)** was named a National Blue Ribbon School in 2019, and consistently ranks in the top 5% of all Michigan Schools. As an International Baccalaureate World School, we offer the Middle Years and Diploma Programmes and has an excellent legacy of college and university preparation.



>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**COIT CREATIVE ARTS ACADEMY (PK-5)** is an authorized International Baccalaureate World School offering the Primary Years Programme (PYP). We embody inquiry-based learning rooted in arts education. Valuing all voices and experiences, we prepare our students to be leaders and global citizens.

>> **EXPLORE YOUR CHOICES AT THE SCHOOL CHOICE EXPO THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021.**



**CONGRESS ELEMENTARY (PK-8)** is a true neighborhood school nestled in the East Hills Community with strong local partnerships supporting our students in becoming academically competitive for our ever-changing global economy.



**DICKINSON ACADEMY (PK-8)** is a cultural center where English learners are supported by a qualified team of bilingual staff. It also exposes students to diversity and promotes culturally competent awareness and acceptance.



**EAST LEONARD ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** is a small but mighty school. Because of this, the staff can learn each child's name and develop strong relationships. We work collaboratively to provide a safe, caring, and supportive environment for all children.



>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**GERALD R. FORD ACADEMIC CENTER (PK-8)** offers students a college focused environment where they learn to embrace the idea that college is important. Students are prepared for this goal by building habits of excellent scholarship and leadership.



**GRAND RAPIDS LEARNING CENTER** is a unique college preparatory high school completion program in partnership with Grand Rapids Community College. This program is designed to re-engage 16 to 19-year-olds who seek to obtain a high school diploma.



**GRAND RAPIDS MONTESSORI ACADEMY (PK-12)** classrooms help children to develop independence, concentration, and a sense of order through the use of Montessori materials designed to provide a unique and individualized learning experience.



**PUBLIC MUSEUM SCHOOL** >> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)** students attend school inside the Grand Rapids Public Museum, using museum exhibits and programs as resources on a daily basis. School projects are designed to engage our downtown community, develop design thinking skills such as creativity and collaboration, and utilize high-tech tools of innovation.



**PUBLIC MUSEUM SCHOOL** >> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)** is powered by partnerships. Students integrate rigorous academic content with learning the art and science of curating powerful museum exhibits while working side-by-side with city planners and community organizers.

MAKE GRPS **YOUR CHOICE!**



>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**GRAND RAPIDS UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY ACADEMY (6-12)** students create an individualized learning plan with input from their advisor and parent or guardian. This plan guides their work and is based on the student's personal interests, skill level, maturity, and learning style.



**HARRISON PARK (PK-8)** represents a richly diverse community that deeply cares about the students and families and celebrates the unique cultures they represent.



>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**INNOVATION CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)**

**5 GREAT ACADEMIES**



Preparing students for careers in education through dual enrollment and real-world teaching opportunities.



Learning about business, management, marketing, and finance through cutting edge classroom instruction, internships, and real world experience.



Engaging students in architecture, engineering, design, and construction through real world and hands-on experiences.



Combining a high quality STEM education with college and career preparation.



Going beyond the classroom to develop the skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics needed in the health care industry.



**KEN-O-SHA PARK (PK-5)** encourages a growth mindset for children to become leaders who can take on the challenges of the future. We are dedicated to guiding our students toward a successful path that includes learning in the classroom and outdoors around our campus that is adjacent to the beautiful Ken-O-Sha Trail and Plaster Creek.



**KENT HILLS ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** provides a safe, nurturing environment enabling all students to achieve their maximum potential. Staff, parents, and community work hard to put Kent Hills students first.



**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (PK-8)** features modern, 21st Century classrooms, collaborative learning spaces, and a beautiful library/media center. Drawing upon our namesake, Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Academy is committed to instilling the values of hard work, academic achievement, appreciation for diversity, service to others, and leadership among students and the communities in which they live.



**MULICK PARK ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** thrives on student leadership. Students are given leadership opportunities such as morning announcements, PBIS behavior rotations, safety posts, and hallway monitoring.

>> **EXPLORE YOUR CHOICES AT THE SCHOOL CHOICE EXPO THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021.**



>> THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT

**NORTH PARK MONTESSORI (PK-8)** is a pedagogy that believes in following the interest and social emotional development of children. School programs have multi-age classrooms, three-hour uninterrupted work cycles, and use hands on materials to teach abstract academic concepts.



**OTTAWA HILLS HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)** strives to provide a quality education through respectful relationships. Our **Early Middle College Program** gives students the opportunity to take college courses starting in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, allowing students to graduate with a high school diploma and an associate degree with at least 60 transferable credits!

3 GREAT ACADEMIES >> THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT



Students will prepare for Michigan's top in-demand jobs in sports, entertainment, lodging, travel, food, and event management.



Students will pursue their passion with academics that lead them to career paths in television, commercials, radio, news, movie production, and music production.



Students will develop skills that will build the foundation of career readiness for police, firefighting, military, and local, state or federal agency careers.



**PALMER ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** provides a robust educational experience for our students. We believe in providing individualized instruction to meet and exceed the academic needs and expectations of our students.



>> THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT

**RIDGEMOOR PARK MONTESSORI (PK-6)** students learn by making discoveries with the materials, cultivating concentration, motivation, self-discipline, and a love of learning.



**RIVERSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)** is committed to creating a true comprehensive middle school environment that focuses on student achievement and supports students socially and emotionally. We offer several courses that give our students opportunity to earn high school credit.



**SHAWMUT HILLS (PK-8)** students have the opportunity to participate in rich experiences. Our amazing, dedicated, consistent, and passionate staff ensure that every child has the opportunity to have their educational and socio-emotional needs met.



>> THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT

**SHERWOOD PARK GLOBAL STUDIES ACADEMY (PK-6)** uses inquiry-based learning to integrate Global Studies education into the preschool through sixth grade curriculum. As an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) Candidate School, each grade level explores our world through six transdisciplinary units that focus on the development of the whole child (academic, social, and emotional).

MAKE GRPS **YOUR** CHOICE!



**SIBLEY ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** is a diverse neighborhood school with strong roots in the community to support student learning.



**SOUTHEAST CAREER PATHWAYS (9-12)** is a small setting to support students who may need an alternative route to earning their high school diploma. With small class sizes, staff can provide more support to students to help them reach their goals.



>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**SOUTHWEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ACADEMIA BILINGÜE (PK-6)** is dual-language theme school where students become proficient in both Spanish and English languages, biliterate, and bicultural. Families are actively involved in free-of-charge programs offered by community organizations that provide an opportunity for parents to socialize with other parents and to benefit from activities of their interest.



>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**SOUTHWEST MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIA BILINGÜE (7-12)** students are supported by a caring staff with a deep knowledge of immersion pedagogy and a passion for teaching. The school's administration and staff are committed to preserve a positive school environment with a foundation on respect, compassion, and caring for each other.



**STOCKING ELEMENTARY (PK-5)** is a community of learners, families, businesses, and organizations whose goal is to support and grow the students and community.



**UNION HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)** understands that equitable education and compassion are the cornerstone to any successful institution, and we strive to bring that to our students and community every day. The goal of our community is that all students feel included, valued, and supported.



**WESTWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)** prides itself on the diversity of its student population and offers language learner support through ESL instruction. Students can master their skills in all core content areas while simultaneously exploring their interests through a wide range of electives.



>> **THEME SCHOOL APPLICATION  
REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT**

**ZOO SCHOOL (6)** is located at John Ball Zoo and offers a rigorous curriculum that takes education to the next level and prepares students for the world by encouraging creativity, independence, and academic excellence.

>> EXPLORE YOUR CHOICES AT THE SCHOOL CHOICE EXPO **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021.**



# WORLD-CLASS PRESCHOOL

## FOR YOUR CHILD THIS FALL!

Learning in a Grand Rapids Public Schools world-class preschool classroom prepares children to be successful in kindergarten and beyond. Experts agree that children who have quality early learning experiences are better prepared to be successful in school and throughout life. Preschool is the essential first step in your child's lifelong education.

- Tuition-free for families meeting income and eligibility criteria
- Research based curriculum
- Culturally diverse staff
- Individualized learning goals
- Full day program
- 26 convenient locations
- Hands-on activities
- Purposeful learning through play
- Outdoor and community learning opportunities

**APPLY TODAY AT [PRESCHOOL.KENTISD.ORG](https://www.kentisd.org/preschool)**

We are always happy to answer your questions. Please contact us today!  
(616) 819-2111 | [earlychildhood@grps.org](mailto:earlychildhood@grps.org) | [enroll.grps.org](https://www.enroll.grps.org)



# PREESCOLAR DE PRIMERA CATEGORÍA PARA SU HIJO ESTE OTOÑO

El aprendizaje en una clase preescolar de primera clase en la Escuelas Públicas de Grand Rapids prepara a los niños para tener éxito en el kindergarten y después. Los expertos coinciden en que los niños que tienen las primeras experiencias de aprendizaje de calidad son mejor preparados para tener éxito en la escuela y a lo largo de la vida. El Preescolar es el primer paso esencial en la educación continua de su hijo/a.

- Matricula gratis para familias que cumplen el criterio de ingreso y elegibilidad
- Currículo basado en investigación
- Personal de culturas diversas
- Metas individualizadas de aprendizaje
- Programas de días completos
- 26 lugares convenientes
- Actividades manuales
- Juegos con propósitos
- Oportunidades de aprendizaje al aire libre y de la comunidad

**APLIQUE HOY A [PRESCHOOL.KENTISD.ORG](https://PRESCHOOL.KENTISD.ORG)**

Siempre estamos alegres de contestar sus preguntas. Por favor contáctenos hoy.  
(616) 819-2111 | [earlychildhood@grps.org](mailto:earlychildhood@grps.org) | [enroll.grps.org](https://enroll.grps.org)

## Updates from the Family and Community Engagement Office

# GRPS



## FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Parent University

If you haven't already, explore the Parent University website at [parents.grps.org](https://parents.grps.org). This website contains Digital Learning links, Trending News, the Power Parent magazine, Parent University coursework, and K-12 Milestone videos.

Discover the Power Parent magazine. This publication targets parents and families with timely articles supporting student success. The October 2021 edition focuses on Race, Equity and Diversity. Learn tips and strategies to support your children as they grapple with race and racism. In addition, browse the age appropriate activities to guide difficult conversations with your children.

Check out the Parent University calendar and register for courses, events, and family field trips. A variety of courses have

been created to meet the needs of our families. You will find academic, lifestyle, health, cooking courses and more! Parent University courses will be offered throughout the entire 2021-2022 school year.

The Trending News section, located on the front page of Parent University, has up-to-date information for GRPS families. In addition, every month a GRPS Family of the Month is featured. Read all about this month's featured family!

### Parent University's Course of the Month

The Family and Community Engagement department has started hosting "Taste Buddies" events. Taste Buddies feature a GRPS leader or local chef who virtually cooks and/or bakes alongside students and their caregivers. Together, families create delicious meals they enjoy together. Meal prep bags are distributed to registered participants and cookbooks are also included in every bag. The cookbooks include meal-time conversation starters, foodie jokes and riddles, and ways to incorporate language, literacy, and math into the kitchen. Join Chef Love, owner of Burger and Bomb Sandwiches, on November 17, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. and create Jambalaya. Interested participants must complete the registration form at [forms.gle/NPXxJDkQ5vAuhKXL6](https://forms.gle/NPXxJDkQ5vAuhKXL6).

### PALs - Parent Action Leaders

PALs are Parent Action Leaders who serve as liaisons between families, schools, and GRPS. Every school has at least one PAL and they support their school families. To find a specific school's PAL, go to [parents.grps.org](https://parents.grps.org). Open the Power Parent magazine. Search Join a Parent Group on the right side of the magazine.

Select the school and the PAL will be listed.

### F.A.C.E. Relationships

The Family and Community Engagement office has partnered with many new organizations for the 2021-2022 school year. Some of the partnerships include the Grand Rapids Civic Theater, West Michigan's Alzheimer's Association, Spectrum Culinary Health, GRPS Fine Arts and Technology departments, GR Parks and Recreation, Storytime in the Park, and so much more. These relationships will be represented through Parent University courses, family field trips and community events.



**JOIN OUR TEAM!**  
**COME BE PART OF THE GRPS TRANSFORMATION**

## ARE YOU READY?

**To change the world? To work with children?  
To transform public education?**

**GRPS is looking to fill current and future vacancies for the 2021-2022 school year.**

### Positions include:

- Teacher
- Food & Nutrition
- Paraprofessional
- Custodial/Maintenance
- Clerical
- Security & Safety
- Child Care Worker
- And More!

**INTERESTED CANDIDATES MAY VIEW OPENINGS AND APPLY AT**  
**[CAREERS.GRPS.ORG](https://careers.grps.org)**



Save the Date

Grand Rapids Public Schools  
Foundation's Annual

# MINDSHARE FUNDRAISING EVENT

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

*More details to follow...*



Grand Rapids Public Schools  
FOUNDATION

[grpsf.org](https://grpsf.org)

## Alumni, Fans Celebrate 150 Years of GRPS at Hard-Fought Game

*'Crosstown Throwdown' part of sesquicentennial year*

By Alexis Stark, Courtesy of School News Network  
Photography by Dianne Carroll Burdick

After warming up his vocals alongside fellow Staff Notes GR members, Emilio Rodriguez came off Houseman Field excited to be an alumni of Grand Rapids Public Schools.

"It's what this game is all about: getting the GRPS family together," Rodriguez said. "I was a student and now I'm a mentor and I still feel like I'm a part of this family."

A 2017 Innovation Central graduate, he is now pursuing a double major in music education and music performance at GRCC, while serving GRPS as a mentor for elementary students.

August temperatures pushing 100 degrees did not stop Grand Rapids Public Schools alumni of all ages from attending the citywide alumni reunion on Friday, Aug. 27.

Celebrating the district's 150th anniversary, the reunion accompanied the Crosstown Throwdown football game between Union and Ottawa Hills. A comprehensive directory of all GRPS graduates is in the works, and other anniversary-themed activities are planned including the annual Grand Rapids Turkey Trot supporting district athletics.

Directed by Debra Perry, Creston class of 1986, Staff Notes GR performed the national anthem before the game, arranged by one of their members, GRPS music teacher Vanessa Allen.

"Our group is super talented and contains several GRPS alumni," said Maggie Malone, GRPS director of fine arts and Staff Notes GR founder. "We all share a love for music, but more importantly we choose to support students and our schools and it's our passion to choose them every day."

Kimmie Jarnegan, a 1985 Ottawa Hills graduate, fondly remembered performing in the theater productions during her high school years.

"My favorite memory of high school was playing the Wiz when we performed 'The Wiz' during my senior year," Jarnegan said.

Jarnegan also comes from a "proud Ottawa Hills family." Her father attended Ottawa Hills, as did all of her siblings and now, her nieces and nephews are in GRPS schools.

While both teams warmed up on the field before the start of the game, Christian Verley, Ottawa Hills head football coach and



High School band students from four different schools warmed up in the stands before the game.



1985 Ottawa Hills alumni Janet Cole relived her days as a high school cheerleader to support her alma mater.

Ottawa Hills alumni class of 2006, shared his excitement for the big game, which Union went on to win, 35-34.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the crowd, the alumni and families watch the culmination of our hard work play out in this game," Verley said.



The Ottawa Hills Bengals huddle to get the team hyped up for the game.

## Creston High School Class of 1951 Celebrates 70th Reunion



My high school class recently held its 70th class reunion. Those who were able to attend are pictured above. I could see in my classmates the remarkable changes in America in the decades since we were young. I could see how despite those changes, we held to the best values and outlooks of our growing up years.

There were 216 people in my graduating class. Twenty of us, now in our 80's, attended the reunion. One came from Florida, and one from Virginia, but most still live in the area. We enjoyed a nice luncheon. The men did not wear suits and ties, and the ladies did not wear their best dress. Everyone wore casual clothing. No professional photographer was hired; my granddaughter took the picture.

Since we were born in the early Depression, our school years extended from WWII to the Korean War. Most of the men did military service. About 1 in 6 women entered college

right after high school.

There was a lot of talk at the luncheon about the fact that we did not have any sports for females, no bussing (3 boys had a car), and we survived the polio epidemic, and didn't have cellphones or computers.

Nine couples in our class married each other, and one couple was in attendance. We talked a lot about our teachers. Some of us went to elementary school together, but most of us went to Creston High School in the seventh grade.

After the photo taking, we still clustered together to talk. We may never see each other again, but I thought that these were good and valuable people, the kind we now badly need during our country's lack of spirit.

## Veteran Grand Rapids Teacher Back in Classroom for 50th Year

### Rockstar Teacher Pat Baker

By Phil de Haan, Courtesy of School News Network

Pat Baker thinks about retirement.

Sure.

There are mornings as she's making the drive to Union High School when she wonders if this might be her last year in the classroom. She sees a couple of crossing guards during her commute and ponders leaving full-time teaching for a part-time gig helping the kiddos get safely to their destination.

Yet, at the end of a day teaching Swift's "A Modest Proposal" or "Beowulf," author unknown, or even Shakespeare's enduring "Macbeth," she thinks to herself that teaching is still pretty good. Her thoughts of retirement dissipate, and thoughts on becoming a crossing guard are put back on hold.

Still.

"Last year, I decided one more year if I didn't have to do virtual," she recently said with a chuckle in her English classroom at Union. "It's 50 years now, and I think maybe '50 and I'm out' seems about right."

Yes, she said it's been 50 years now.

Pat Baker entered the teaching workforce in the fall of 1972 as a newly minted secondary education graduate of then-called Grand Valley State College, with a major in English and minor in history. She was one of only about 500 students to earn bachelor's degrees that year from what was then a college of just over 4,000 students. She went on to earn a master's in reading and statistics from Michigan State University, and did her coursework for a Ph.D. in literature at Michigan State and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

And she is now beginning her 50th straight year of teaching, all of them in Grand Rapids Public Schools.

She started at Central High School and was there 36 years. In 2008, she moved over to Union High School, where she had been part of the first graduating class from what was then a brand-new building in 1968.

And though she admitted she doesn't navigate her classroom quite as quickly as she might have a decade or two ago, to watch her in action is to see a teacher who is still passionate about her subject matter and eager to convey that passion to her students, all of whom are young enough to be her grandchildren.

She also has adapted to many of the dizzying new technologies that mark the classrooms of the 21st century, including not just computers but also projectors and smart boards and learning management systems and much more.



Pat Baker has been leaning on lecterns in GRPS classrooms for 50 years

#### 'Assertive and Attentive'

For her students, the adaptations she has made along the way in her career are great, but what stands out for them about Ms. Baker, as she is known, is much more than technology.

Union senior Jason Ike has Baker this year for the first time, and is nothing but smiles when asked about the veteran teacher.

"It's been great so far," he said. "She has a very charismatic way of getting her students' attention. She is very strong, but everything she does is for the betterment of her students, and for that I respect her."

Classmate Isaac Nhehema Wamujje agreed.

"What I like so far is the freedom and liberty to speak my mind," he said. "Ms. Baker's class feels like it's run tight but enough room to have freedom, and Ms. Baker herself is assertive and attentive to the class but leaves room for ideas and potential for learning. I do enjoy her class, and English isn't even my favorite school subject."

#### 'A Modest Proposal' As a Gateway to College Application Essays

In a recent class on "A Modest Proposal," Baker stood in front of Jason, Isaac and a class of 30 other Union seniors and read from Swift's satire in a clear, confident voice, even as she used the smart technology to highlight in yellow on the screen pertinent passages and clues for her students as to what

they should be looking for in a group exercise to follow. They also would refer to them in subsequent classes and use some of Swift's techniques to write their own college application essays.

Later, she spoke with a classroom guest about the Swift essay, which first was published almost 300 years ago, and how it connects to today's students.

"About 15 years ago, I had a counselor come to me at Central and say, 'These kids have to write these college essays, and they have no clue. So, is there any possibility you could teach them how to write a college essay?'"

Baker said she hit on Swift because of his use of emotional, logical and ethical appeals in his essay, all of which can and should be used, she said, as seniors apply to college and have to write essays of their own.

"Students can learn from Swift how to plan their response, state their claim and use certain appeals to make an impression on an admissions officer," she said. "Swift's essay has the additional benefit of being outrageous enough to attract the attention of a teenager, so we can talk about why it is a good essay."

#### The Worthwhile Moments

That's why, after three classes digging into Swift's methods, she spends another three classes having students craft an essay they can use as part of the Common Application. Better known simply as the Common App, it's an application accepted at

■ CONTINUES ON B15

## Asbestos Notice

Asbestos is a general name for a group of naturally occurring minerals composed of small fibers. These fibers are very strong and resistant to heat and chemicals. The mere presence of asbestos in a building does not mean that the health of the building occupants is endangered. When left intact and undisturbed, asbestos-containing materials do not pose a health risk to building occupants. There is, however, the potential for exposure when the material becomes damaged or disturbed. Because of these problems associated with asbestos exposure, the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act, or AHERA emphasizes that asbestos in school buildings must appropriately be managed.

The Grand Rapids Public Schools has an asbestos management plan that addresses contact persons, training, inspections, response actions, operation and maintenance

activities, periodic surveillance, cleaning, disclosure efforts, and school building areas containing asbestos. Any person may review the management plan at the Grand Rapids Public School's Facilities Management Department, 900 Union, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503, during regular business hours (8:00 am to 4:00 pm). Plans may also be found on the district's website at [grps.org/facilities-asbestos-info](http://grps.org/facilities-asbestos-info). Alternatively, any person may request a copy of the plan by writing the Grand Rapids Public Schools Facilities Management Department, 900 Union, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503. There is a cost involved in reproducing the document of approximately 10 cents per page. The Grand Rapids Public Schools will send a copy out of the management plan within 5 business days of receiving the request.

almost 1,000 colleges and universities around the U.S. and the world, and it includes seven essay prompts that students can respond to, which Baker covers in class.

“I like the fact that we have Google Docs now because they can save that (essay) to their Google Doc, and they can revisit that essay anytime they need an essay and make it work,” she said, eyes alight. She added with a beam on her face: “I had a girl who submitted her college essay that she wrote in my AP class to U of M and got a \$60,000 scholarship based partially on that. So, it’s worthwhile. Yeah.”

Those worthwhile moments have kept her coming back for half a century, and, she admitted, might keep her coming back for a little while longer yet.

“That’s why I keep thinking ‘Do I really want to give this up?’ When you get to see the light bulb come on, when they leave here, and they know something they didn’t know when they came in, those are real positive moments, right.”

### They Deserve Some Breaks

Baker said it’s interesting for her to ponder the arc of her career and consider the students she sees now and those she saw when she first started out.

“I think that today’s students are certainly a lot more keyed into technology phones,” she said. “Although I would say it’s phones more so than computers, because I think I’m as good on

a computer or a laptop as they are those phones. Unfortunately, they’re a lot less inclined to read, to interact with a book. I don’t know as the behavior problems are any more significant now than they were back when I started.”

Indeed, Baker is quick to come to the defense of this generation of Union students. The grandchild of two Dutch immigrants, Baker said that history gives her an empathy for this next generation of immigrants.

“We have a pretty decent student population here,” she said. “I think a lot of these kids are very capable, very bright, they just lack the resources that other districts have. I like these kids, and I think that they deserve some breaks. We have a huge newcomer population here, and those are some pretty rewarding kids to work with. Some of them make a lot of progress in a short amount of time.”

Baker also has fond words for her colleagues and administration at Union, especially her fellow English teachers.

“We collaborate as an English staff quite a bit,” she said. “I think we work really well together.”

### A Great Storyteller with a Historical Perspective

Her colleagues agree, and they speak with admiration about her abilities to teach and to connect.

Stephen Nisbet is a resource teacher at Union and pushes into Baker’s classes to support students who have Individualized

Education Programs. He’s in his 21st year teaching in GRPS, including all of Baker’s 13 years at Union, usually two hours a day.

“She’s a great storyteller who gives kids a historical perspective that they wouldn’t get otherwise,” he noted. “She’s firm but kind, and always prepared. I think she is still the best teacher in the building after all this time because she is in charge and the students find that out very quickly, and students respect that. Underneath that no-nonsense demeanor is a heart of gold who would do anything for anyone. It’s been a blessing to work with her as closely as I have. I value her friendship very much.”

As Baker reflects on her career, she said she would tell the 1972 Pat Baker to not worry quite so much.

“You do not have to tell these kids every little finite detail,” she said. “There is usually a major point they have to get, and then there are some things that go with that major point, and if something falls through the cracks that’s not important, it’s OK. So that would be something else I would tell myself. Took me a long time to learn that, though, because I wanted them to know it all.”

Meanwhile, the Pat Baker now in her 50th year of teaching still loves what got her into education in the first place.

“I love being in the classroom, planning lessons that will engage and teach the students, and having class discussions,” she said. “There is nothing like the interaction with students.”

## Looking for the Right Spot

### Student creates real-world computer programming experience in city parking

By Phil de Haan, Courtesy of School News Network

A frustrating experience trying to find parking ahead of a Grand Rapids Griffins hockey game set a City High junior down a path that may someday benefit others in a similar spot.

Vishnu Mano has been working for close to a year on what began simply as a school project, then morphed into an internship with the city through the Grow 1000 program and now, even after the internship has ended, remains a passion project Vishnu plans to continue to pursue in 2021-22.

The project is called Spotter, and it uses a microcontroller, ultrasonic sensors and code from two programming languages to help drivers quickly find an open parking spot in crowded cities.

His efforts are in the trial phase in a parking ramp at 50 Ottawa NW in Grand Rapids, and he hopes that someday what he’s working on might be an option for parking spot seekers across the city.

The basic set-up is pretty simple. Two sensors are mounted on a small platform and connected to a microcontroller and a power supply. One sensor sends a wave out and if it hits a car, the wave returns to a second sensor which tells the chip to register the parking spot as taken in the accompanying app with a red X. If the wave doesn’t return to the second sensor, then the parking spot is marked as available in green in the app.

The parts are cheap when purchased in bulk. The whole system can be put together for under \$2, Vishnu said.

The reason it works is a whole lot of coding by Vishnu, the gregarious son of two Indian immigrants, who said he began to take an interest in computers and what makes them run already in fourth grade.

### Operating in Real-World Conditions

Already he has made major refinements to the system from when he first began in terms of both its size and accuracy. He



Vishnu Mano in a parking ramp at 50 Ottawa NW where he is field-testing hardware (mounted on the fencing to his right) that pairs with an app to make parking spots easier to find.

has a few other tweaks in mind going forward, including looking at having each unit self-powered (currently they are plugged in). He’s had two units in 50 Ottawa NW for about two months now and is using the in-the-field experience to figure out what’s working well and what needs improvement.

“One thing we discovered is that with curved surfaces the wave could bounce up and not return, and then the spot would seem empty, but it wasn’t,” he recalled. “So, we fixed that with a bit of code.”

A bit of code, in this case, is a bit of an understatement. Along with other programming languages, Vishnu is using a coding language often used for smart appliances such as fridges and dishwashers.

“My favorite part of programming,” he said, “is the potential it gives you to impact your community in a positive way. Doing something real-world is definitely motivating.”

Vishnu’s passions are many. He’s also a violinist with the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony and a state-champion debate team member, and he has a YouTube channel where he posts violin covers of classical Indian songs and tutorials on programming languages.

### Open Source Code Could Lead to Further Improvements

He’s already working on a next iteration of the system that will attempt to include new elements of the latest Apple operating system, specifically the code behind the Find My iPhone feature that now points people to their phone with visual cues.

“That code is now open source,” he said with an excited smile. “I’m going to try to implement that.”

Colin Cooper, one of his internship supervisors, said don’t bet against him.

An information systems coordinator for Grand Rapids, Cooper oversees the selection, implementation and maintenance of department-level technologies, and he recalled how impressed he was when Vishnu reached out to his department by email in early 2021.

“After a Zoom meeting we knew he would be a great candidate for our internship program,” Cooper recalled. “He was professional and organized, and we were excited to facilitate the opportunity for him to build out his idea. Working with Vishnu has been a great experience. His determination, attention to detail and tech-savvy serve him well, and I’m excited to see where these qualities take him in school and beyond.”

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